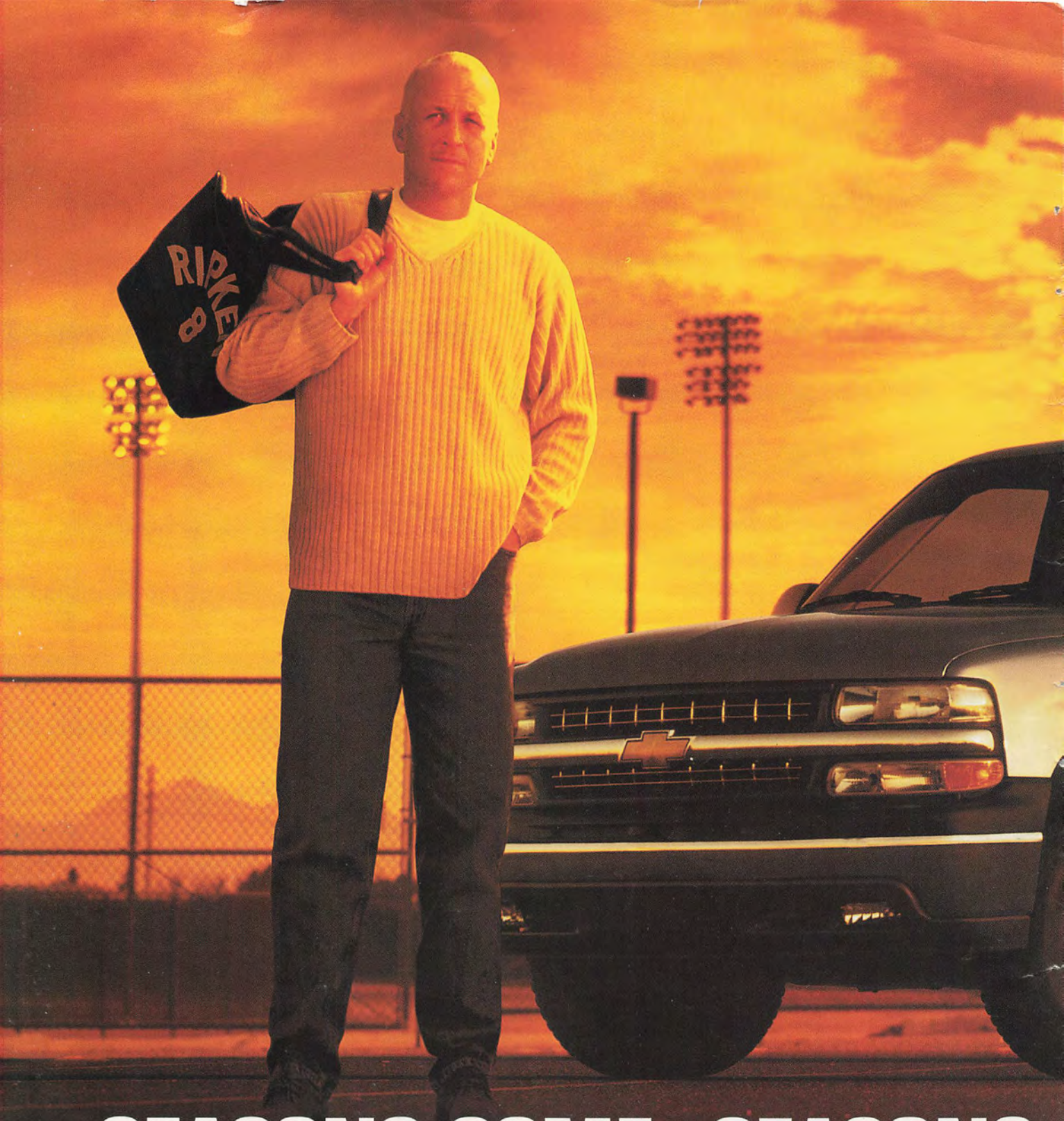
Sports Illustrated
Triple Play
Bonds, Ripken, Gwynn
45
TAKE THAT, TEXAS!
Defending champion Oklahoma showed Chris Simms and the Longhorns that it's still a force
OCTOBER 15, 2001 www.cnnsi.com | AOL Keyword: Sports Illustrated



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The mark of a great ballplayer lies in what he leaves behind. In Cal Ripken, Jr.'s case, that means a legacy of hard work, determination and dependability — in good times and bad. We salute The Man in his last year of Major League Baseball. And want him to know that just a step behind, there'll always be some things he can depend on, too. Chevy™ Trucks. The most dependable, longest-lasting trucks on the road.*

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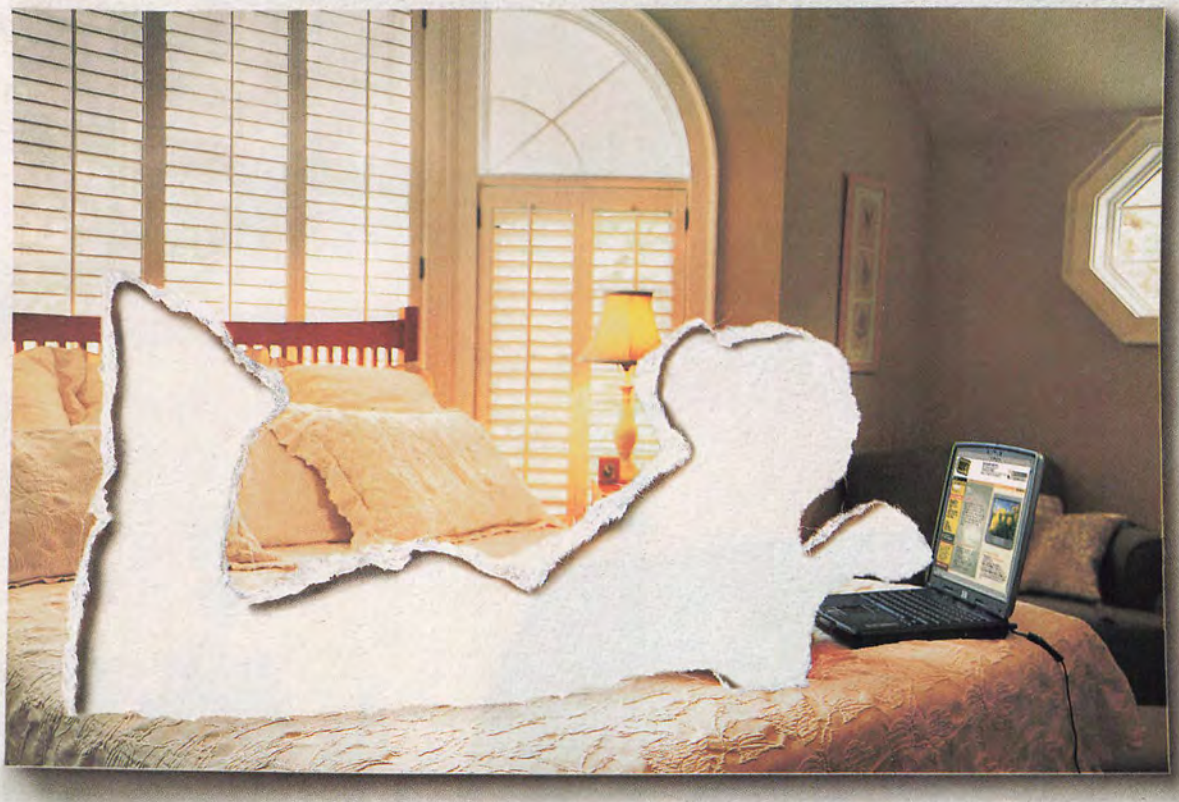

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Sports Illustrated

October 15, 2001
VOLUME 95, NO. 15

The Lineup

Gannon seems headed for a third Pro Bowl and is unquestionably the team's MVPP: Most Valuable Party Pooper.

(PAGE 66)

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Cover

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BIEVER

cnnsi.com

Diamonds in the rough: For postgame playoff analysis from **Tom Verducci**, **Jeff Pearlman** and **Stephen Cannella**, go to **cnnsi.com/baseball**.

Baseball

46 **It's a Wrap!**
With a mighty burst of power, Barry Bonds seized the home run record and capped his astounding season on a weekend that was rich in baseball history
BY JEFF PEARLMAN

50 **Old Glories**
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BY RICHARD HOFFER

College Football

54 **Boomer Sooner**
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BY AUSTIN MURPHY

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60 **Heads Up**
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BY MICHAEL FARBER

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BY JEFFRI CHADIHA

Pro Football

66 **Lost Arts**
There's not much flash in Raider Rich Gannon's game, but moxie and hard work have made him one of the NFL's leading quarterbacks
BY MICHAEL SILVER

High School Football

72 **Remember the Titans?**
Desegregating T.C. Williams High led to a state title and a movie. Thirty years later the progress has been reversed
BY TIM LAYDEN

COURTESY OF THE RIPKEN FAMILY

leadingOff

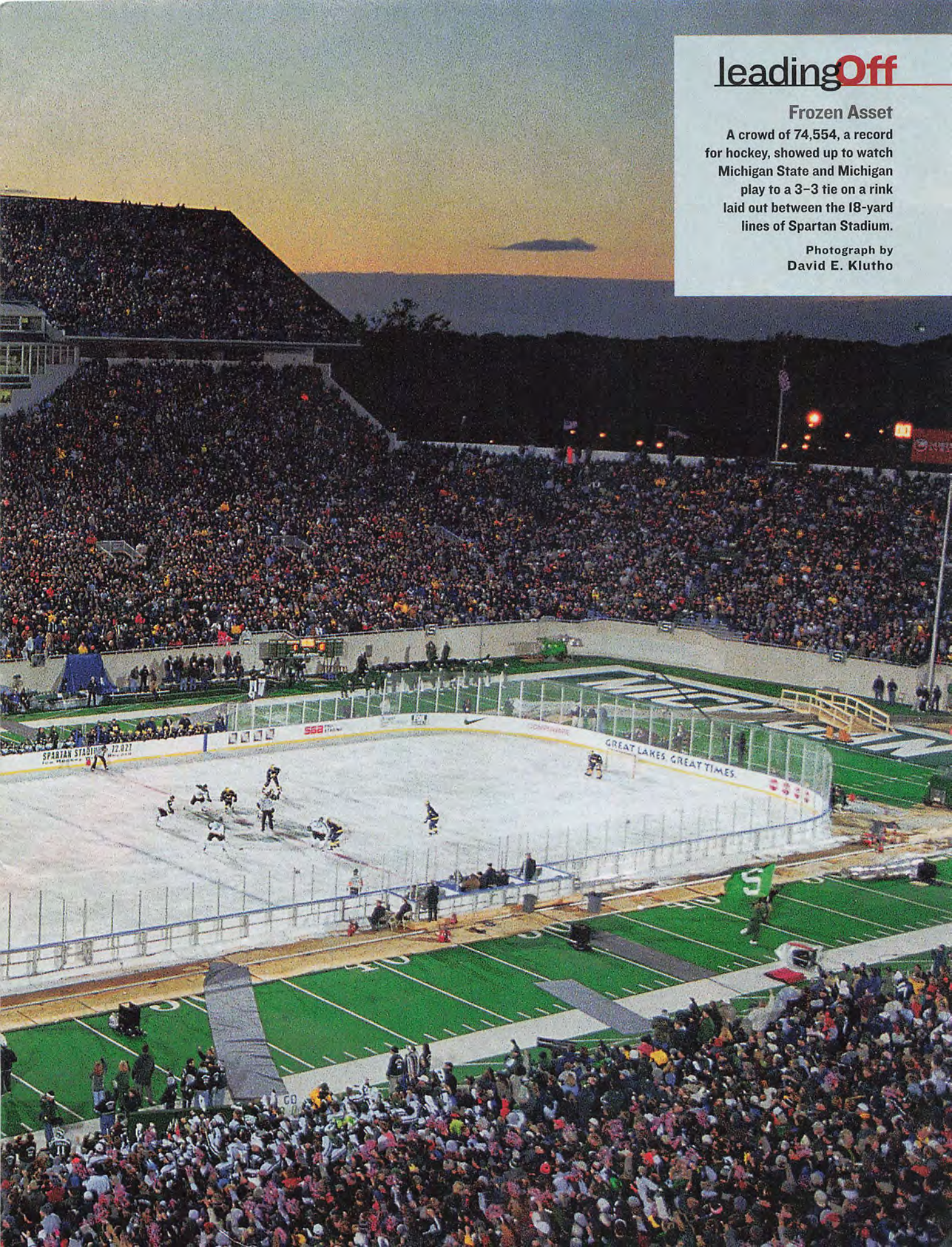
The Bonds Market

A flotilla of fans chokes McCovey Cove beyond the rightfield wall of Pac Bell Park on Sunday, vainly awaiting the arrival of Giants slugger Barry Bonds's 73rd home run of the season. Bonds hit it, but it didn't reach the water (page 46).

Photograph by Brad Mangin

Performance Glove

CHEVY TRUCKS



Frozen Asset

A crowd of 74,554, a record for hockey, showed up to watch Michigan State and Michigan play to a 3–3 tie on a rink laid out between the 18-yard lines of Spartan Stadium.

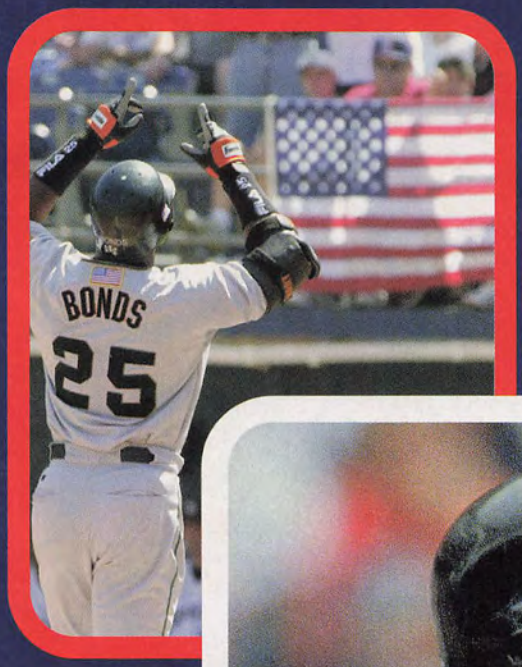
Photograph by
David E. Klutho

leadingOff

Hung Over

Members of the Project Bandaloop performing arts group drink in the spectacular view while hanging from ropes at Wildcat Point in Tuolumne Meadows, Calif.

Photograph by Corey Rich



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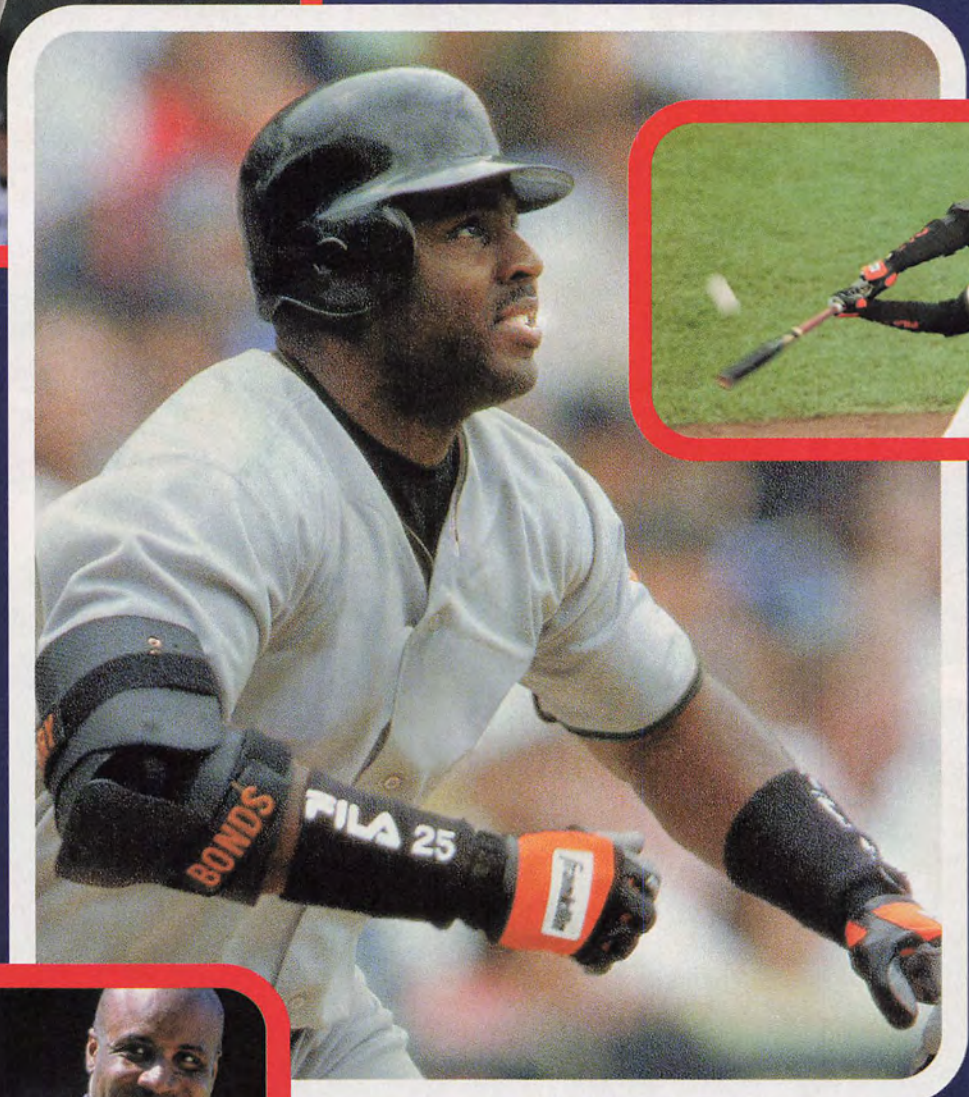

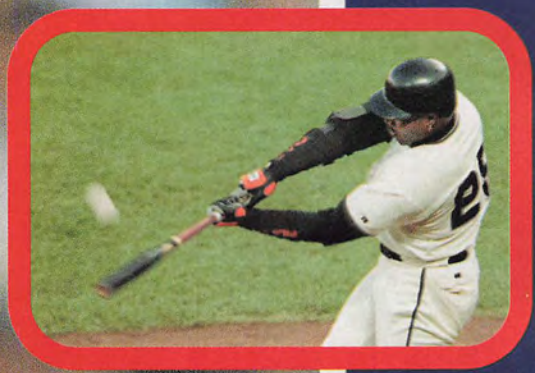

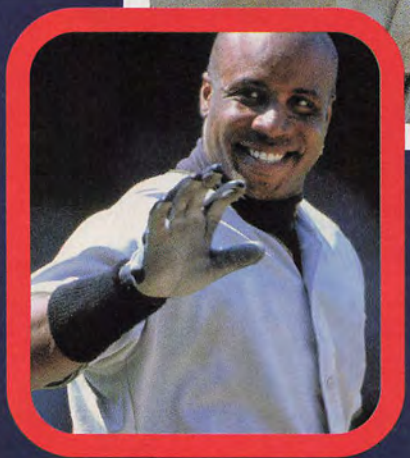

Fila congratulates Barry Bonds
on his historic home run hitting season.
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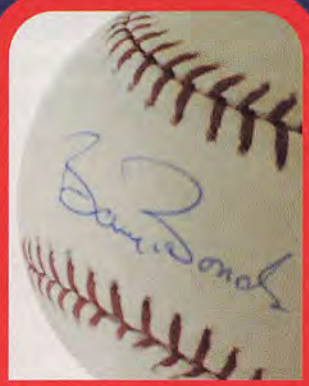

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Letters

Clemens, See

Roger Clemens can attribute much of his past, present and future success to his family (*Rocket Science*, Sept. 10). So ingrained in him are baseball and the art of the strikeout, I'm not surprised to learn that all his kids' names (Kody, Kacy, Koby and Kory) begin with K.

Jeff Grenier, Dallas

I'm afraid it's going to take a lot more than a portrayal of Clemens as a family man to change America's mind about him. His headhunting and his hiding behind Joe Torre when Clemens would have had to bat at Shea Stadium will forever label him as baseball's biggest s.o.b. since Rob Dibble.

Craig Lowell, Highland Mills, N.Y.

If you are going to use a Biblical reference, please get it right: Let he who is without sin cast the first splintered bat.

K. Nicole Wilson, Lexington, Ky.

Falling for It

Kudos to Steve Rushin on his "Fall Guy" piece (AIR AND SPACE, Sept. 10). I grew up in a small town in Iowa and couldn't wait for football to begin. I still have my spiral notebooks—my wife thought I was the only one—and I dress in Vikings gear from head to toe every Sunday.

Ed Miska, Maple Grove, Minn.

September does induce a strange sports nostalgia. When I picked up the local newspaper during a quiet moment on campus in my freshman year, I welled up when I saw articles previewing the upcoming high school football action. It was going to be a new and exciting fall, but something would definitely be missing.

Mike Torppey, Baltimore

Love Set

Coaches (*Passion Plays*, Sept. 10), ask yourselves this: Would any of these women have even looked in your direction if you weren't in a position of power?

Chris Coates, Gainesville, Fla.

When coaches and players become lovers? Stick to real sports stories. I don't care if Brandi Chastain married her coach. Like most guys, I only cared that she ripped off her shirt when she scored that goal.

Pete Kiely, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

Fork It Over

The glittering 18–1 record fashioned by the Pirates' Elroy Face *(right)* in 1959 is even more remarkable because it was achieved entirely in relief. With his masterly forkball, Face would baffle batters until the pesky Pirates—one year before their World Series victory—would pull out the win. During Pittsburgh's 78–76 season, Face accounted for 23% of the Bucs' wins!

Phil Curtis, Atlanta

FRANCES MILLER/TIMEPIX

Responsible Reaction

SI's recent report of Glenn Ordway's comments on WEEI in Boston (SI VIEW, Sept. 24) were both inaccurate and unfair. As a listener to Ordway's radio show during the two weeks following the terrorist attacks in the U.S., I can say without hesitation that Ordway has been a voice of reason and a great example of a responsible media member. To suggest that Ordway in any way advocated turning the Middle East into a parking lot as a knee-jerk reaction to our current crisis is, quite simply, untrue.

Scott Lurvey, Dracut, Mass.

SI regrets the inaccurate portrayal of Mr. Ordway's position. —ED.

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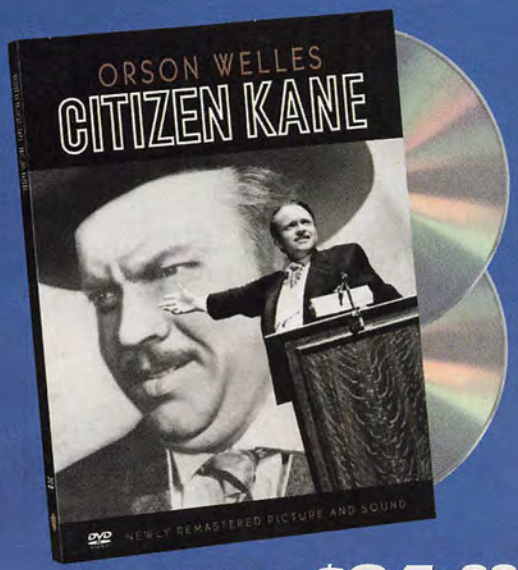

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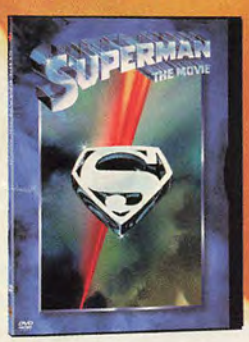

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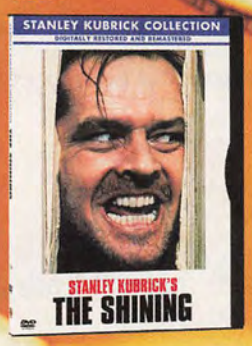

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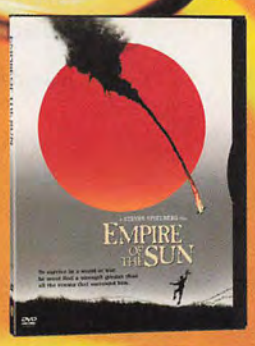

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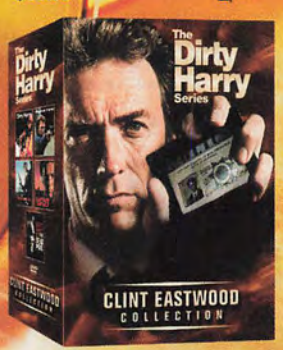

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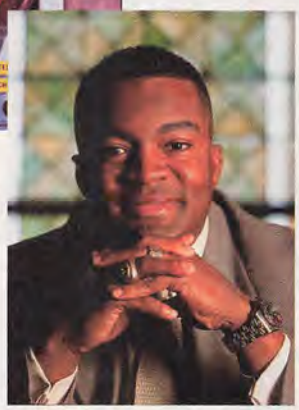
Charles Thompson, Sooner

FEBRUARY 27, 1989

TEN YEARS after walking out of a federal prison in Big Spring, Texas—where he'd served 17 months for conspiracy to distribute cocaine—former Oklahoma football star Charles Thompson is deep into the business of saving people. Thompson isn't a preacher, but he teaches inner-city youngsters about the game of life. "You envision yourselves as young athletes, and you want to be on the cover of SPORTS ILLUSTRATED," Thompson tells audiences of dreamy, would-be NFL and NBA players. "Well, I made it! But it wasn't in a uniform: It was in an orange jumpsuit, wearing handcuffs."



"I made some very bad decisions," he says, "but I don't harp on how I shot myself in the foot."

Thompson, a wishbone quarterback, was the Sooners' top rusher when he was a sophomore, in 1988. He was so quick afoot that an NFL scouting service rated him the nation's 10th best *tailback* prospect. However, in February 1989—with Oklahoma's football program already in turmoil because of NCAA rules violations and allegations that players had been involved in a shooting and a rape—the 21-year-old Thompson was arrested for allegedly selling cocaine to an undercover officer. "I made some very bad decisions," he says, "but I don't harp on how I shot myself in the foot." When Thompson got out, shortly before his 24th birthday, he was offered a chance to return to the gridiron at Central State, an NAIA school in Ohio. Thompson led the Marauders in rushing, and after graduating in 1994 with a B.A. in marketing, played three years in the CFL and the World Football League. When a shoulder injury ended his career in '96, Thompson moved to Oklahoma City.

The death of a childhood friend in a car accident a few years ago drew Thompson closer to religion. "I began to get in tune with myself spiritually and developed a personal relationship with my Lord, Jesus Christ," Thompson says. "I'm grateful for the gift of eternal life, which millions of dollars and playing in the NFL could not give me."

When Thompson, 33, isn't speaking to school assemblies and youth groups or at home with his wife, Kori, and their three sons, Kendal, 9, Casey, 3, and Cade, 1, he works as a national account manager for Lifeline Communications, a long-distance service provider that donates 10% of its monthly revenues to Christian organizations and ministries. Thompson is grateful that by recounting his fall from grace, he can help teens avoid trouble. "I'm a great speaker, I can communicate well, and I'm a motivator," he says. "Now I have an audience that will pay attention to Charles Thompson not because he scored touchdowns, not because he could run faster than anyone else, but because he lived a story that needs to be heard." —*Amanda Ward*

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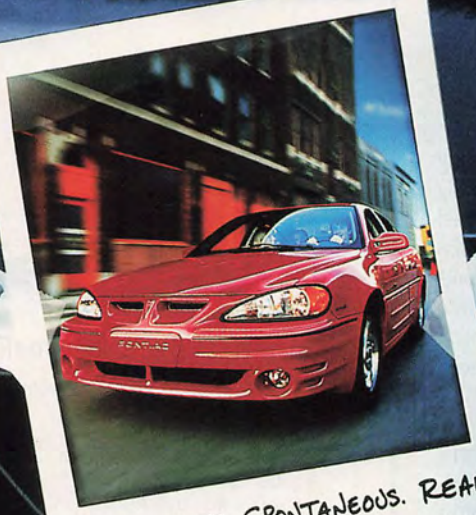

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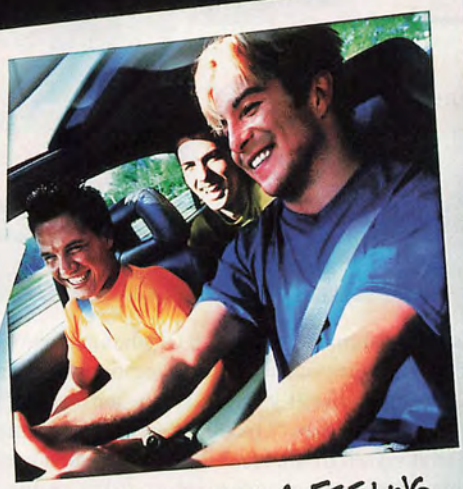

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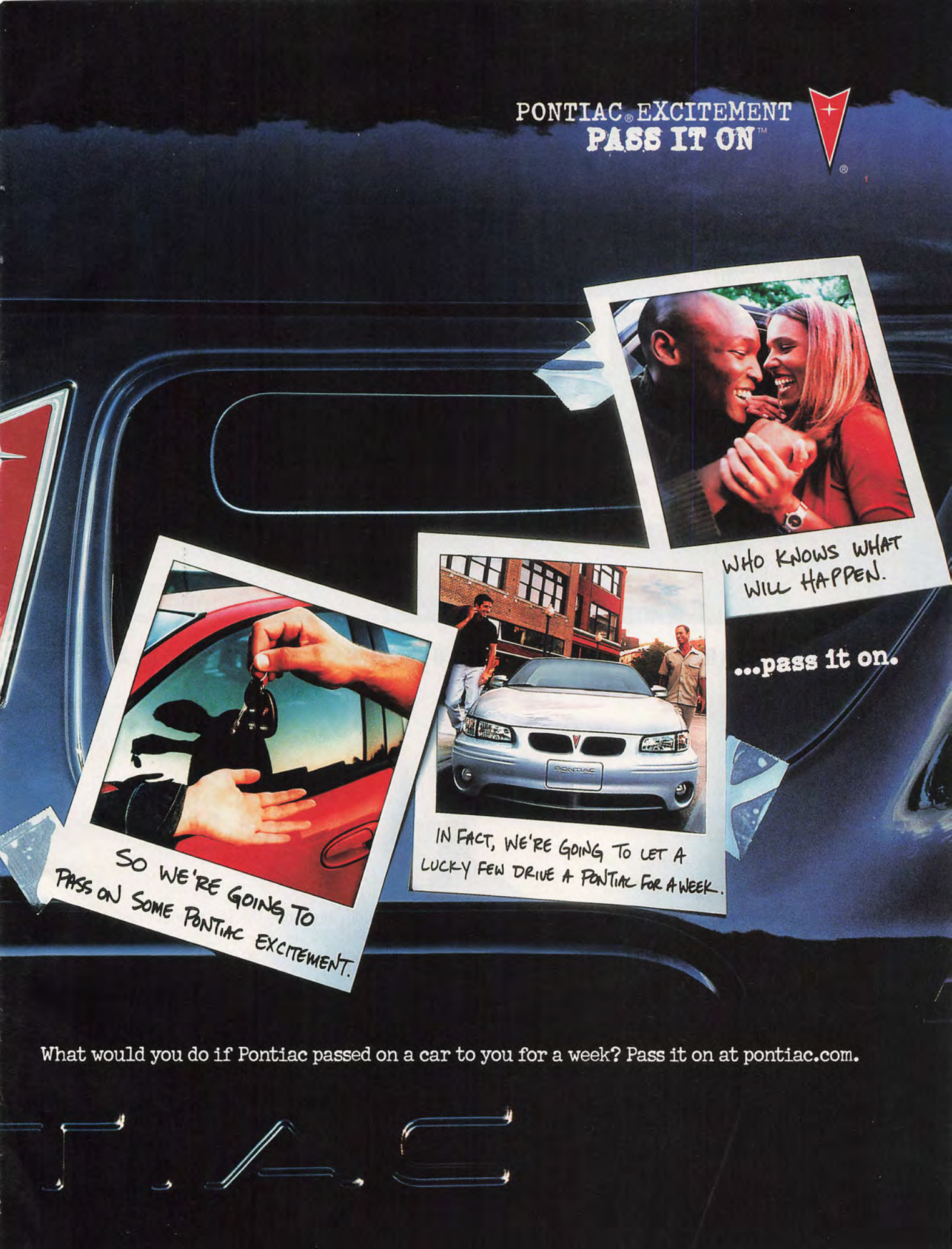
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Carnac: I must have absolute silence. . . .

Answer: Daffy Duck.
Question: What did Dizzy Dean tell his brother when they walked under a ladder?

A: Brushback.
Q: What should you do if a Laker Girl brushes against you?

A: The rough, not the fairway.
Q: How does Marty McSorley fight?

A: Sugar baby.
Q: What does Dick Vitale put in his coffee?

A: Heidi Heidi Heidi Ho.
Q: Describe four consecutive pages of the SI swimsuit issue.

A: Crunch 'n' Munch.
Q: Name the respective ab workouts of Eddie George and Tony Siragusa.

A: Jerry curls.
Q: What does Jerry Glanville do if you leave him too long on the radiator?

A: Caesar dressing.
Q: What does one see when looking at a cheerleader through the peephole in the locker room at Veterans Stadium?

A: Bob and weave.
Q: Name the respective hairstyles of Dorothy Hamill and Marv Albert.

A: Iron Mike Ditka.
Q: What should you do when Mike Ditka gets wrinkly?

A: Gladiator.
Q: Describe Rich Garces after he accidentally ate a woman who approached his table for an autograph.

A: Kwame Brown.
Q: What is J. Crew's worst-selling color of roll-neck sweater?

A: Benchmarks.
Q: What does Ryan Leaf have on his butt?

A: Love–15.
Q: What does Steve Garvey do after meeting 20 groupies?

A: Cuban sandwich.
Q: What's the final (and most dreaded) number demanded at Mavericks dance-team tryouts?

A: Gaelic hurling.
Q: What do you see in Times Square on St. Patrick's Day?

A: High and dry.
Q: Describe J.R. Rider in galoshes.

A: Necktie.
Q: What did Ty Cobb's wife do in the back of their Buick?

A: Blockbuster.
Q: What do other patrons do when Buster Douglas approaches a buffet?

A: Kellogg's Corn Flakes.
Q: Why won't Clark Kellogg's pedicurist see him anymore?

A: McEnroe.
Q: What does a rapper do in a canoe?

A: Milk Duds.
Q: What did a lonely dairy farmer try to do to Chris Dudley?

A: Brian Griese.
Q: Why no one touch Brian? □

DAN PICASSO

Highlights

SATURDAY 10/13

▶ Mike Tyson vs. Brian Nielsen

SHOWTIME 10PM (TAPE DELAY) Nielsen has the same surname as actress Brigitte Nielsen, who was married to Sylvester Stallone, who starred in *Rocky V* with Tommy Morrison, who was knocked out in the sixth round by Lennox Lewis, who took 95 seconds to destroy Andrew Golota, who went AWOL before the third round against Tyson last Oct. 20. Obviously the world (at least the world of Showtime) still revolves around Tyson (48–3, 42 KOs). As usual, Nielsen (62–1, 43 KOs), a not-so-melancholy Dane, is expected to enter the ring for this 10-rounder at Parken Stadium in Copenhagen to the strains of *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life.*

MONDAY 10/15

▶ Redskins at Cowboys

ABC 9 PM The reason to tune in is perversity: The last 30 minutes of this game could turn out to be the worst half-hour of sports programming this year not named *Inside Schwartz.* The Capital Gang and America's Team have fallen on hard times; both are winless and aimless. We're particularly curious to see the promotional campaign ABC's spinmeisters come up with for this potential football version of *Heaven's Gate.* ("It's Tony Banks against Anthony Wright in a battle of up-and-coming quarterbacks!")

TUESDAY 10/16–FRIDAY 10/19

▶ Baseball League Championship Series

FOX (CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS) That forlorn man you see roaming the streets of St. Louis might be NBC's Bob Costas. As part of its six-year, $2.5 billion contract with Major League Baseball, Fox is the sole network airing the League Championship Series. Regrettably, for the first postseason since 1993, the people's commissioner will have to watch from home like the rest of us.

TOM DIPACE

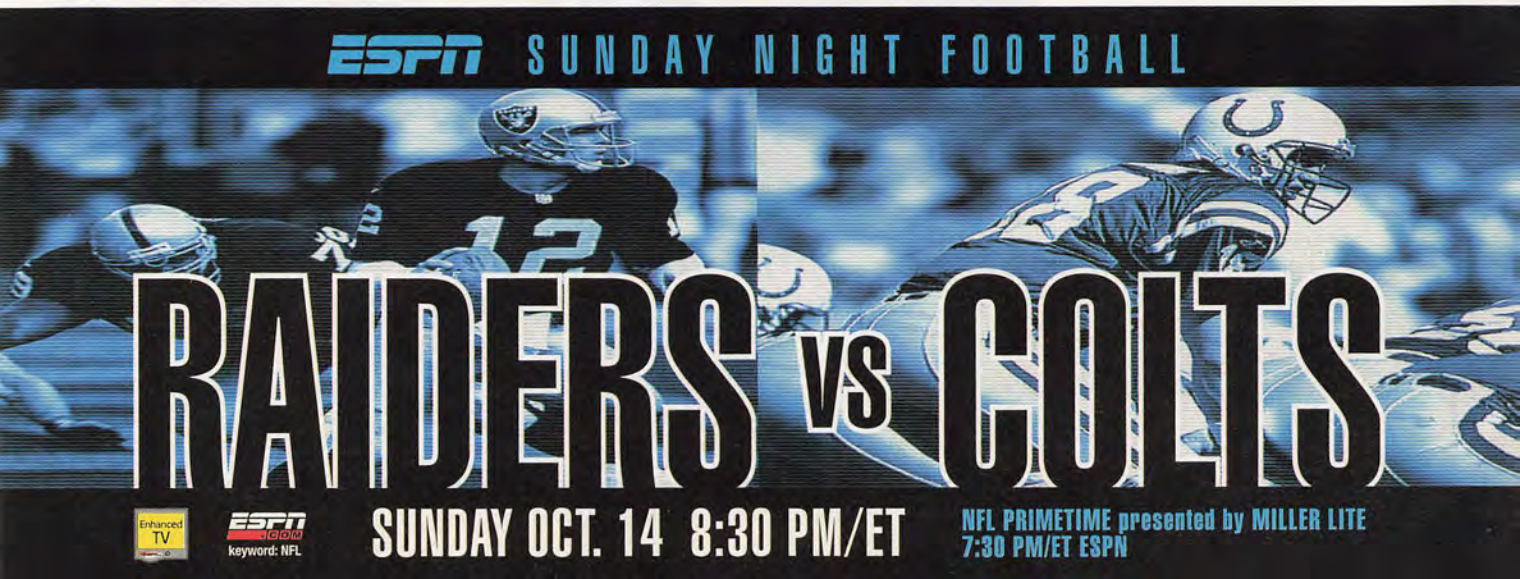
Don't Miss

SATURDAY 10/13

▶ Miami at Florida State

ABC NOON The job of Seminoles placekicker should come with a warning: THIS POSITION CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO BOBBY BOWDEN'S HEALTH. Last year's game between these two teams was a typical heartbreaker for the septuagenarian Bowden. The Hurricanes beat then–No. 1 Florida State 27–24 when, with time expiring, Seminoles kicker Matt Munyon's 49-yard field goal attempt sailed—where else?—wide right. The game was a coming-out party for quarterback Ken Dorsey, who completed six of seven passes on the Hurricanes' final drive, including a 13-yard touchdown throw to tight end Jeremy Shockey with 51 seconds to go. This year Miami comes in ranked No. 2, while No. 14 Florida State has a kicking savior in freshman Xavier Beitia, who hasn't missed in five field goal attempts. Of course, Beitia has yet to boot into a Hurricane.

ALL TIMES EASTERN. SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



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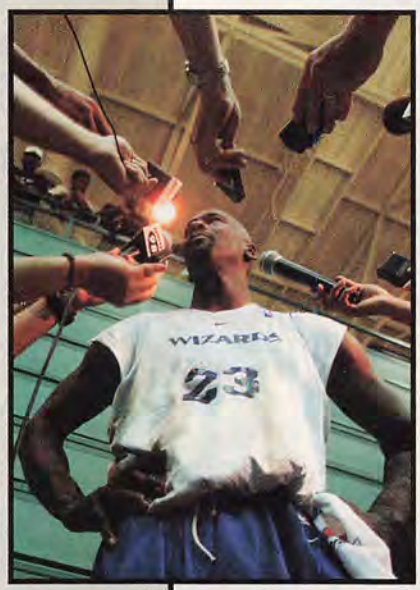
EARLY FOOT

In the first weeks of the season, Sportsline.com's innovations on nfl.com have paid off for both sites

LIKE ROME, ESPN wasn't built in a day. The empire we know today was seven years old and straining to make a profit in 1987 when it entered TV sports' big leagues by acquiring rights to NFL games. In May **sportsline.com**—in its seventh year of operation and attracting two thirds the visitors of the sports leader on the Web, espn.com—was hoping for a similar lift when its parent, Sportsline.com Inc., joined Viacom and AOL Time Warner (SI's parent) in a successful $110 million bid for the rights to produce **nfl.com** for five years. "There's no question that we made [producing nfl.com] a target," says Joe Ferreira, Sportsline.com's vice president of programming.



The deal has helped both sites. This season nfl.com has been upgraded significantly. In addition to offering real-time scores and statistics, and (unlike baseball and the NBA's official sites) free links to the radio broadcasts of both teams involved in any game, nfl.com last week introduced live play-by-play. Another of the site's play-by-play features, the statistics-laden GameDay Live!, requires the Shockwave 8.5 plug-in; we found it fun, though sometimes frustratingly slow to load. Not unexpectedly, there isn't much hard-edged journalism on a site owned by the league, but the nfl.com home page includes links to sportsline.com stories that can be less than flattering.

The most recent Nielsen Net Ratings of sports sites—for the week ending on Sept. 30—showed sportsline.com, with 1.86 million unique visitors (defined as those viewing the site one or more times), surging ahead of third-place espn.com (1.54 million) and finishing second, to nfl.com (2.05 million). Sportsline.com's number of visitors may grow in the next Nielsen Net Ratings, because on Oct. 7 the NFL site matched its biggest Sunday to date, with 2.2 million unique visitors. *—John O'Keefe*

THE ZAPPER

Fox has ditched 1st & Ten, the computer-generated yellow line that indicates how far a team must go to get a first down, from its NFL telecasts. Reason: The cost ($20,000 to $25,000 per game) can't be justified because the device doesn't attract additional viewers. Perhaps—but we think Fox should be penalized (loss of down?) for depriving viewers of one of the best broadcast innovations since instant replay. . . . *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel* (HBO, Tuesday, 10 p.m.) presents a cautionary segment on the stimulant ephedrine, which was banned by the NFL last month.

More Air Time

STEVE BUCKHANTZ first got an inkling of how much Michael Jordan wanted to play while spending the evening of last Dec. 6 with His Airness. As the two of them watched a 19-point lead against the lowly Clippers dissipate into a 93–88 loss, Jordan, the Wizards' president of basketball operations at the time, could not contain his frustration. "When the lead got down to 11, he looked at me and said, 'This is not good,' " says Buckhantz, Washington's TV play-by-play man who, because the game wasn't being telecast, was sitting with Jordan in the owners' suite of the MCI Center. "I could see him almost coming out of his suit, wanting to be down there to do something about it."

Now that Jordan is doing something about it, Buckhantz finds himself at the epicenter of a national story. While NBC has the exclusive rights to broadcast as many as 11 Wizards games, and Turner Sports can show 15, no telecasters will track Jordan more closely than Buckhantz and his on-air partner, Phil Chenier. Comcast SportsNet, the local TV rights holder for the Wizards, plans to telecast all the games it's permitted to, which means Buckhantz will call a minimum of 71 regular-season games. (Comcast can show locally any Wizards games that appear on TBS or TNT.) Moreover, Comcast quickly arranged to televise three preseason games; thus Buckhantz is scheduled to be behind the mike on Thursday when Jordan makes his Wizards debut, in Detroit. "Even before MJ, I had the best job in the world," says Buckhantz, 46. "Who would have thought that now I'd get to tug on the cape of Superman?"

While Jordan's return won't affect TV rights fees for the Wizards (Comcast SportsNet signed a 12-year deal with the club earlier this year), Comcast SportsNet president David Nevins predicts the local Nielsens will increase 500% from a paltry 0.7 average (14,000 homes) last season, when Washington went 19–63. Though he declines to provide specific advertising sales figures, the Jordan effect should result in a seven-figure revenue increase this season.

With Jordan (above) back on court, Wizards announcers will have to get to work early.

Buckhantz may feel a different effect. When His Airness was a Bull, his pregame ritual entailed clapping chalk onto the face of broadcaster Johnny (Red) Kerr. Would Buckhantz be willing to sacrifice his mug? "I would be very excited if Michael threw anything in my face," he says. —R.D.

COLIN BRALEY/REUTERS

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“You've got tickets, you don't throw them in the garbage.” PAGE 30

Scorecard

Edited by Albert Kim and Mark Mravic

PICK AN MVP, ANY MVP

The American League is chock-full of candidates this season

Let's begin with the premise that the American League's MVP should come from what was not only the winningest team in the league this year but also the winningest team in the history of the league. Then we have to ask: Who's the MVP of the Mariners, Ichiro Suzuki or Bret Boone?

Start, as Seattle does, with the leadoff hitter. Suzuki won the batting title (.350), set a rookie record for hits (242), finished first in stolen bases (56) and second in runs (127), and deserves a Gold Glove for his defense in rightfield. So, just as Barry Bonds is the obvious pick in the National League, Suzuki must be his league's MVP, right? Wrong.

Suzuki's primary value is as a catalyst, a table setter. In this role he isn't extraordinary, as evidenced by his .381 on-base percentage, 14th in the league, including a poor .307 with none out and no one on. Rickey Henderson, the last leadoff hitter to win an MVP award, for the A's in 1990, had a .441 on-base percentage that year. As for slugging percentage, Suzuki ranks a lowly 39th. How many outfielders have won the MVP without placing in the top 10 in either category? Zero.

So the MVP must be Boone. The Mariners were worried about their offense this spring after losing Alex Rodriguez, but Boone picked up where A-Rod left off. Batting mostly third or fifth, he drove in 141 runs, tops in the league, while hitting .331. Upon closer inspection, though, Boone had a whopping 202 at bats with runners in scoring position and hit a bit worse in those situations (.302). A great season, but a serendipitous one, too.

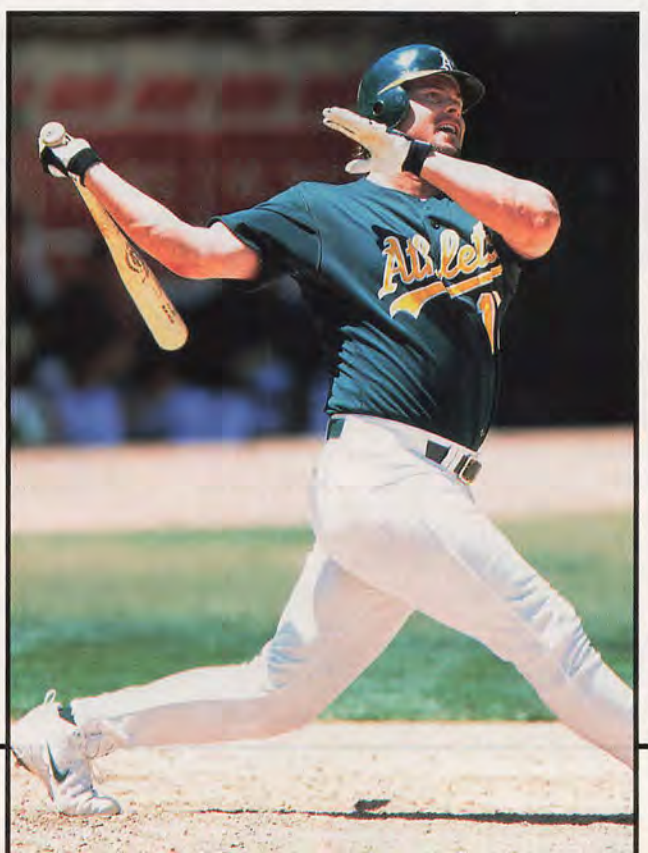
Maybe our premise was wrong. After all, no Yankee finished first or second in MVP voting in any of New York's four recent world-championship seasons. That opens the door for a lot of candidates.

The Indians have three. Jim Thome led Cleveland in homers, slugging and on-base percentage—but he was a nonfactor in the first two months of the season (.247 average), was neutralized by lefthanders (.232, four home runs) and far too often failed to make contact (185 whiffs). Juan Gonzalez had 140 RBIs, but he batted .271 in the late innings of close games, missed 22 games and DH'd in 21 others. “He takes days off,” says one scout. “Robbie Alomar is the glue of that team.” Indeed, Alomar played his usual incomparable defense at second base, hit .424 with runners in scoring position and had a .415 on-base percentage. He'd be a terrific choice for MVP—were it not for A's first baseman Jason Giambi.

Giambi led the league in slugging and on-base percentage. Since the MVP award was instituted in 1931, 10 of the 15 players who did that for a postseason-bound team have won it. Giambi got on base 32 more times than Suzuki. He had 89 fewer at bats than Boone with runners in scoring position but had only 21 fewer RBIs. He had 21 more extra-base hits and 20 more RBIs than Alomar.

Giambi hit in the clutch (.354 with runners in scoring position, .355 late in close games) and hit consistently (19 homers, 60 RBIs before the All-Star break; 19 and 60 after). He's also the spiritual leader of a team that adopted his hang-loose philosophy while rescuing its season with a 58–17 record after the All-Star break. No player contributed more to a playoff-bound team. That's why the search for the American League MVP isn't really that difficult. It leads right back to where it ended last year: with Giambi as the winner. —*Tom Verducci*

CHASIN' JASON Giambi had a huge season, but was it his league's best?



BRAD MANGIN

STATITUDES

CAREER MILLSTONES

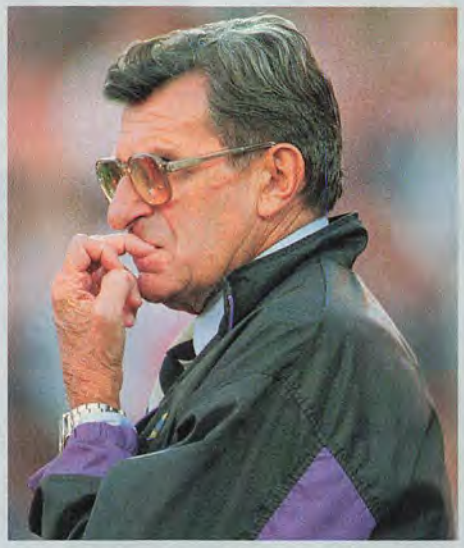
Things are getting somber in Happy Valley, where Penn State coach Joe Paterno has been stuck on 322 career wins—one short of Bear Bryant's Division I-A record—since last November. The Nittany Lions are 0–4 for the first time, with formidable Northwestern and Ohio State coming up. If JoePa can't get Penn State untracked, he could be beaten to Bear's mark by Florida State coach Bobby Bowden, who has 318 wins. Paterno isn't the first sports figure whose wait to reach a milestone turned into a weight around his neck.

White Sox pitcher **Early Wynn** entered the 1962 season with 292 career wins and seemed a lock to reach 300 that year. But after Wynn amassed a 7–12 record to reach 299 wins on Sept. 8, he dropped his last three decisions. He didn't get number 300 until July 13 of the following year, pitching for the Indians. Wynn finished 1–2 for Cleveland and retired with exactly 300 victories.

That number is also a benchmark for catchers: Only three had hit 300 home runs before **Gary Carter** of the Mets did it in 1988. He swatted number 299 on May 16 and then didn't hit another for 225 at bats over nearly three months before belting number 300.

Jimmie Foxx's dry spell, between 499 and 500 homers, wasn't as long. Still, it represented a tortuous span for a slugger who had averaged a round-tripper every 14.2 at bats when the 1940 season started. Foxx belted number 499 on Sept. 4. It took him 20 days to reach 500, which is what he finished the year with.

Sometimes No. 1 is the toughest mark to reach. Golfer **Bobby Wadkins** failed to win an event in 712 attempts on the PGA Tour, from 1975 to 2001. He holds the record for most Tour earnings (more than $2.8 million) without a win. Wadkins, though, found new life at 50: In August he won in his first time out on the Senior tour.



Paterno is having a bear of a time matching Bryant.

Then there are the guys who come up just short. On Sept. 24, **Tuffy Rhodes** of the Osaka Kintetsu Buffaloes tied Sadaharu Oh's Japanese single-season record of 55 home runs. Alas, in the final five games he failed to bag number 56. Seems Tuffy, an ex-Cub, will have to wait till next year. Paterno, who doesn't have a patsy on his schedule, might have to do the same.

Go Figure

$95–$135

Cost to attend the Wizards' intrasquad scrimmage on Oct. 9—attendees had to purchase a season ticket to home basketball games of UNC-Wilmington, where Michael Jordan and his teammates were holding preseason camp.

$8,000

Amount Ray Lewis, Shannon Sharpe, Tony Siragusa and Rod Woodson were each paid by NFL Films to make themselves available to be interviewed by HBO for its documentary series *Hard Knocks* on the Ravens' training camp.

60

Years that Helen Robinson served as the Red Sox' telephone operator until she died last week at age 85.

25

Position of Miami in MIT astrophysicist Wes Colley's college football computer ranking, one of eight used in the BCS formula; he has the Hurricanes four spots behind Middle Tennessee State and 23 below their AP rank.

Trading in Hate

Running back Rod Smart, a.k.a. the XFL's He Hate Me, signed with the Eagles last week, marking the latest high note in his dizzyingly up-and-down career. Here's a glance at how Smart's stock has fared over the years:

Nov. 20, 1999 Standout senior tailback for Western Kentucky finishes season with Ohio Valley Conference–leading 1,249 rushing yards.

Oct. 28, 2000 Las Vegas Outlaws select him with 357th pick in XFL draft.

April 16, 2000 Passed over in NFL draft.

Feb. 3, 2001 15 million viewers watch as XFL begins play and NBC focuses on Smart's jersey, which has HE HATE ME emblazoned on it.

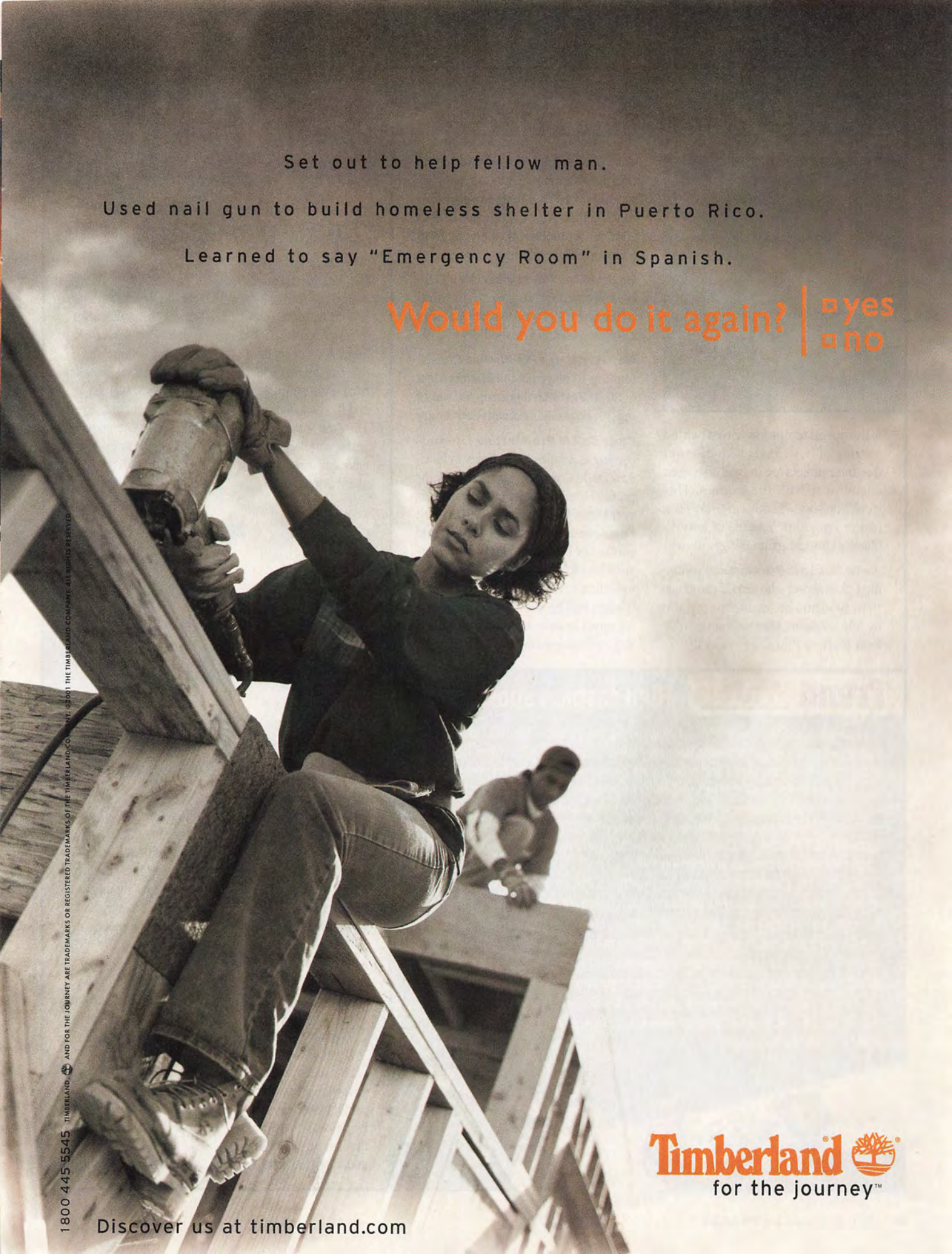
May 10, 2001 XFL folds.

Aug. 14, 2001 Signs with Edmonton Eskimos of the CFL; plays vs. B.C. Lions three days later, returning five kickoffs and two punts for 93 total yards.

Aug. 22, 2001 Released by Eskimos.

Oct. 2, 2001 Signed by the Eagles. Says Smart, "I was always prepared for this."

LOU CAPOZZOLA (PATERNO); BOB ROSATO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The Hingis Jinx

A European temptress leaves behind a string of boyfriends who discover that their careers are in peril after their encounters with the woman. This week's episode of *Law and Order*? No, just the romantic résumé of tennis's black widow, Martina Hingis. To wit:

Justin Gimelstob **Pre-Martina** Promising U.S. prospect who turned pro at age 19 in 1996 and broke into the top 100 by July '97 **Dated Martina** Summer '97 **Post-Martina** Plummeted to 138

Julian Alonso **Pre-Martina** Hard-hitting Spaniard who broke into top 40 at beginning of 1998 **Dated Martina** Summer '98 **Post-Martina** Finished '98 at 106; now unranked and suffering from a chronic back ailment

Ivo Heuberger **Pre-Martina** No. 2 player in Switzerland rose to 125 in world rankings in '98 **Dated Martina** Summer '99 **Post-Martina** Finished '99 at 219

Magnus Norman **Pre-Martina** Consistent top 10 player **Dated Martina** Most of 2000 **Post-Martina** Dropped out of top 30; now sidelined with back injury

Chris Calkin **Pre-Martina** Up-and-coming assistant state attorney in Florida's Dade County; assigned to high-profile Hingis stalking case earlier this year **Dated Martina** April '01 to present **Now** Accused of unethical conduct and conflict of interest by lawyer for convicted stalker Dubravko Rajcevic, due to Calkin's relationship with Hingis. (Calkin said he and Hingis began dating after the case; a circuit judge ruled Rajcevic's conviction will stand.)

Trend Watch — High fashion sports gear

It's every surfer's dream: bright sun, low winds, big swells, a $2,400 Gucci board under your arm. All right, maybe not every surfer's dream, but for riders looking to make fashion waves, Gucci and other haute couturiers can help. Yes, the world of high fashion has discovered the lure of adventure sports. Trendy skateboarders can now ride on a $450 Burberry deck *(below, right)*, chic climbers can outfit themselves in Chanel's $195 helmet and $640 mountaineering boots, and fashionable skiers can strap on $520 Pradas. As Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld says, "Fashion is no longer restricted to suits, dresses and evening wear."

Why has the glamour class gone for the pret-a-sporter look? Adventure sports apparently have become culturally hip enough to attract the attention of the fashion elite. As Paulene Hsia, a lecturer in fashion retailing at the Institute of Textiles and Clothing at Hong Kong's Polytechnic University, told the *South China Morning Post*, "To be seen as a brand on the cutting edge, fashion houses have to tap into existing trends and culture. Brands are increasingly into lifestyle marketing."

In short, expect to see more jock gear along the lines of Gucci's $1,020 kick-boxing gloves and Chanel's $1,250 snowboard *(below, left)*. Can a BMX by YSL be far behind?

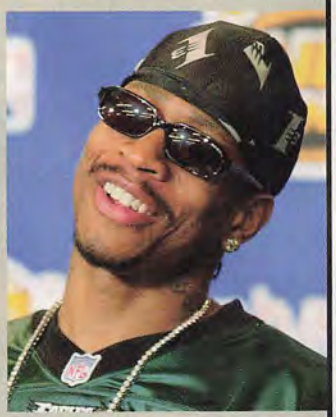
Blotter

Assigned

▸ *Washington Post* metropolitan reporter Michael Leahy, to cover Michael Jordan on a daily basis for the paper. According to the job description, the paper hopes for "an account of a season that will be truly great journalism and that will distinguish *The Post* among all the authors and writers who have and who will write about Jordan."

Scrapped

▸ By **Allen Iverson**, the release of his rap CD, because of the negative reaction to his single *40 Bars*, whose lyrics were seen as misogynist and homophobic. Said Iverson of the album, the release of which had been put off twice, "I feel like people took it the wrong way, and it kind of took all the excitement out of it."



Banned

▸ England soccer captain David Beckham, from wearing a stars-and-stripes armband, as a gesture of support for the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks, during his country's World Cup qualifier against Greece last Saturday. FIFA, soccer's governing body, said it would have been an inappropriate political statement. Beckham dedicated his last-minute goal, which put England into the World Cup, to the U.S.

Promised

▸ To the New York Public Library, the manuscript of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, which Colts owner Jim Irsay bought at auction in May for $2.43 million. Irsay says he'll give the scroll to the library if Kerouac fans raise $2.5 million to aid victims of last month's attacks.

Won

▸ By Georgia Tech, a suit against Salt Lake City's Triple A baseball team over the ball club's use of the nickname Buzz, which Georgia Tech had trademarked for its mascot. The university spent more than $700,000 to win a $600,000 settlement from the team, which has been renamed the Stingers.

Purchased

▸ The Fatburger chain of West Coast restaurants, by an investment group led by Magic Johnson.

CHUCK SOLOMON (HINGIS); KIM D. JOHNSON/AP (IVERSON); MANNY MILLAN (2)

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We visited Detroit's Comerica Park last Saturday for the afternoon doubleheader between the hapless Tigers (65–94, 24½ games out in the AL Central) and the hopeless Royals (63–96, 26½ games out) to ask some of the estimated 2,500 fans on hand the all-important question:

What the hell are you doing here?

"We hadn't been to Comerica Park before. It's beautiful. Plus, we had discount tickets." —*Hing Wong, 37, St. Clair Shores, Mich.*

"There's, like, nothing to do today, and I have no homework this weekend." —*Jason Leineke, 12, Grosse Pointe, Mich.*

"You've got tickets, you don't throw them in the garbage, you know." —*Bill McDonald, 71, Battle Creek, Mich.*

"I had a ticket for a game that was rained out in April." —*Louise Cross, 78, Detroit*

"We had tickets as part of a church group. We had 25 originally, but only five came." —*Casaundra Williams, 31, Saginaw, Mich.*

"They're the closest team to our house." —*Alex Potter, 13, Bedford, Mich.*

"Hey, the sun was shining, so we said, 'What the heck.' " —*Carrie Armstrong, 37, with her father, Ellsworth Anderson, 87, Dearborn, Mich.*

"I have season tickets. I'm using the ticket up." —*Leon Taylor, 68, Detroit*

"It's something to do on a Saturday." —*Don Dolinski, 69, Rochester Hills, Mich.*

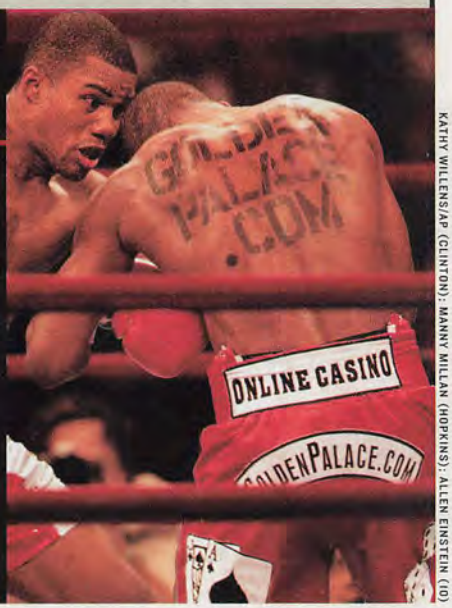
"I wanted to take my little brother to a game so he could collect autographs. We came to a late-season game because if only 10 people are here, he has a better chance." —*Daniel Baker, 20, with his brother Mike, 12, Walled Lake, Mich.*

the Beat

Strange to say, but the hottest place for a Hollywood celebrity or a sports star to be seen these days is ground zero. Everyone from **Muhammad Ali** to **Elizabeth Taylor** has visited the site of the World Trade Center disaster, ostensibly to help raise the spirits of rescue workers. The celeb traffic has gotten so heavy that city officials have sent out a plea requesting that famous faces keep away. Says Richard Sheirer, director of the New York City Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, "They think they're helping, but in some instances you should not be distracting these people." That hasn't stopped stars from pulling whatever strings they can to get a close-up view of the devastation. **Lance Armstrong** arrived via helicopter with **Bill Clinton**. **Don King** somehow gained access and took a tour. **Reggie Jackson** was at first stymied in his attempts to visit, but a quick call to New York governor **George Pataki**'s office fixed that. Then again, not everyone could muster enough pull to get downtown: **The Amazing Kreskin** was turned away. . . . At a benefit roast of *Washington Post* sportswriter **Tony Kornheiser** last week, the columnist turned to **Hillary Clinton** and gushed about his feelings for her. "I've had a crush on Senator Clinton *(above)* for a long time," said Kornheiser. "She's smart and sexy." For her part, Clinton recalled that when she was asked to participate in the roast, which raised $400,000 for spina bifida research, her initial response was, "Who the heck is Tony Kornheiser?". . . New York Giants center **Dusty Zeigler** is a popular guy these days, and it has nothing to do with his play. His cousin April Zeigler, a senior at Georgia, appears in the October issue of *Playboy* in the "Girls of the SEC" feature. ("April, a health promotion major, enjoys skiing on water or snow.") Says Dusty, "I'm big-time now. All [my teammates] want to come to my family reunion—even the married ones."

They Said It

BERNARD HOPKINS
Middleweight champ, asking his agent to get him more body ads for future fights like the temporary tattoo for an online casino he had on his back during his Sept. 29 bout with Felix Trinidad: "I want you to do me like NASCAR."



KATHY WILLENS/AP (CLINTON); MANNY MILLAN (HOPKINS); ALLEN EINSTEIN (10)

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Faces in the Crowd

Pat Noonan, BALLWIN, MO.
Soccer
Noonan, an All-America junior forward at Indiana, had 12 points in three games to lead the No. 6 Hoosiers over Butler, No. 8 Penn State and Michigan State. He also scored the game-winner against No. 2 Washington and has been involved in 14 of the Hoosiers' 19 goals this season.

Tim Shaw, LIVONIA, MICH.
Football
Tim, a senior running back at Clarenceville High, became the first Michigan high school player to score 100 career touchdowns, after getting three against Richard High in Riverview. Tim, who's also the Division 3 state champ in the 100 meters, is averaging 16.9 yards a carry and has 28 TDs this season.

Ruben Nieves, STANFORD, CALIF.
Volleyball
Nieves, 42, coached the U.S. men to their first World University Games gold medal as they defeated France in the title match and won 21 of 25 games in the seven-match tournament. Nieves, who guided Stanford to the national title in 1997, was twice the NCAA men's volleyball coach of the year.

Kristy Veazie, DEXTER, MAINE
Field Hockey
Kristy, a senior forward for Dexter Regional High, broke the state record for career goals when she scored her 83rd, off an assist from her sister, Brittany, a sophomore. Kristy, who has scored 30 of the 13–0 Tigers' 74 goals this season, led Dexter Regional to state championships in 1998 and 2000.

Mike Podolak, OXBOW, N.DAK.
Golf
Podolak, 47, earned his 20th state championship by winning the North Dakota stroke-play title with a seven-under 203. The 1984 U.S. Mid-Amateur champ and an '85 Walker Cupper, he has won seven state stroke-play, seven mid-am, four match-play and two better-ball crowns.

Zoë Nelson, KALISPELL, MONT.
Cross-country
Zoë, a freshman at Flathead High, broke her third girls' high school course record of the season by winning the three-mile Mountain West Classic in 17:51. Zoë, who has won all six races she has entered, has led the nine-time state champion Bravettes to a 4–2 record this fall.

TRIVIAL MATTERS

Getting Schooled

▶THE FLORIDA COUNT
The marquee matchup in college football this Saturday is Florida State's showdown with archrival Miami in Tallahassee. The Hurricanes have a 24–20 advantage in the series, which dates back to 1951. Which school is the only one to have a record that is 10 or more games over .500 against the Seminoles?

a. Auburn **b. Florida**
c. Houston **d. Louisville**

▶RUNNING UP THE SCORE
Running backs Dwone Hicks of Middle Tennessee State (18.4 points per game) and Chester Taylor of Toledo (18.0) are first and second in the nation in scoring. Who holds the single-season record for most points per game?

▶THIS WEEK'S MATCHUP
Can you match the first-year head coach with his alma mater?

1. Mark Richt, *Georgia* — **a. Bucknell**
2. Pete Carroll, *USC* — **b. Miami**
3. Greg Schiano, *Rutgers* — **c. Pacific**
4. Jim Tressel, *Ohio State* — **d. Baldwin-Wallace**

▶CALL TO ORDER
Put these schools in chronological order, starting with the most recent, based on the last time they finished in the Top 10.

a. Air Force
b. Arkansas
c. Illinois
d. Syracuse

ANSWERS
THE FLORIDA COUNT: c. In its 16 meetings with Florida State (the last coming in 1978), Houston is 12-2-2.
RUNNING UP THE SCORE: Oklahoma State's Barry Sanders scored 234 points in 11 games in 1988 for a record 21.3 points per game.
THIS WEEK'S MATCHUP: 1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. d
CALL TO ORDER: 1. Syracuse (1992); 2. Illinois ('89); 3. Air Force ('85); 4. Arkansas ('82)

FROM TOP: PAUL RILEY; D.C. GOINGS; DAVID GONZALES; ALAN RABIDEAU; DAN KOECK; ROBIN LOZNAK

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Marine One Crew Chief
U.S. Marine Corps

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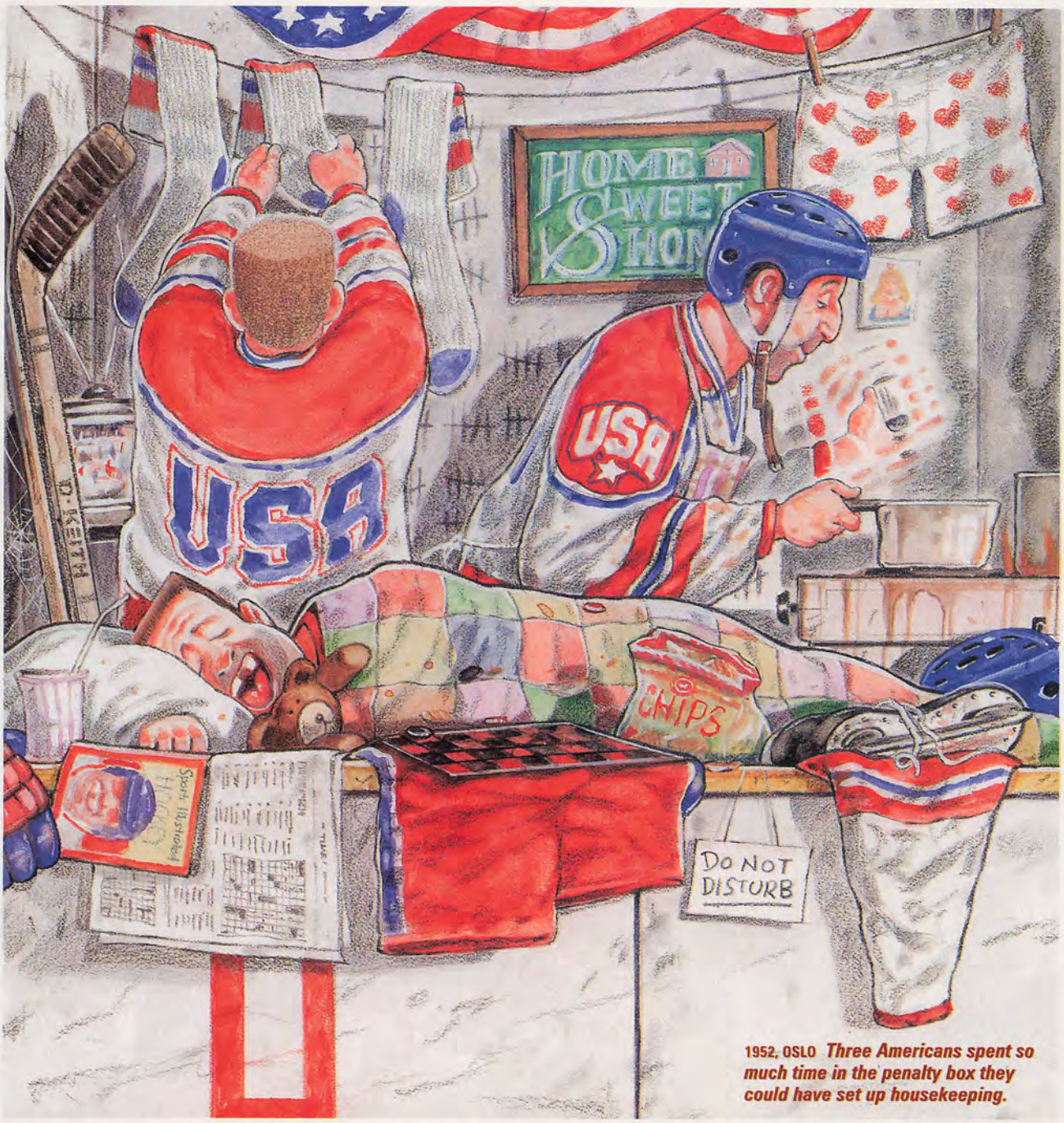
PATHWAYS TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES

ICE HOCKEY



1952, OSLO ***Three Americans spent so much time in the penalty box they could have set up housekeeping.***

Fun & Games At The Games By David Wallechinsky

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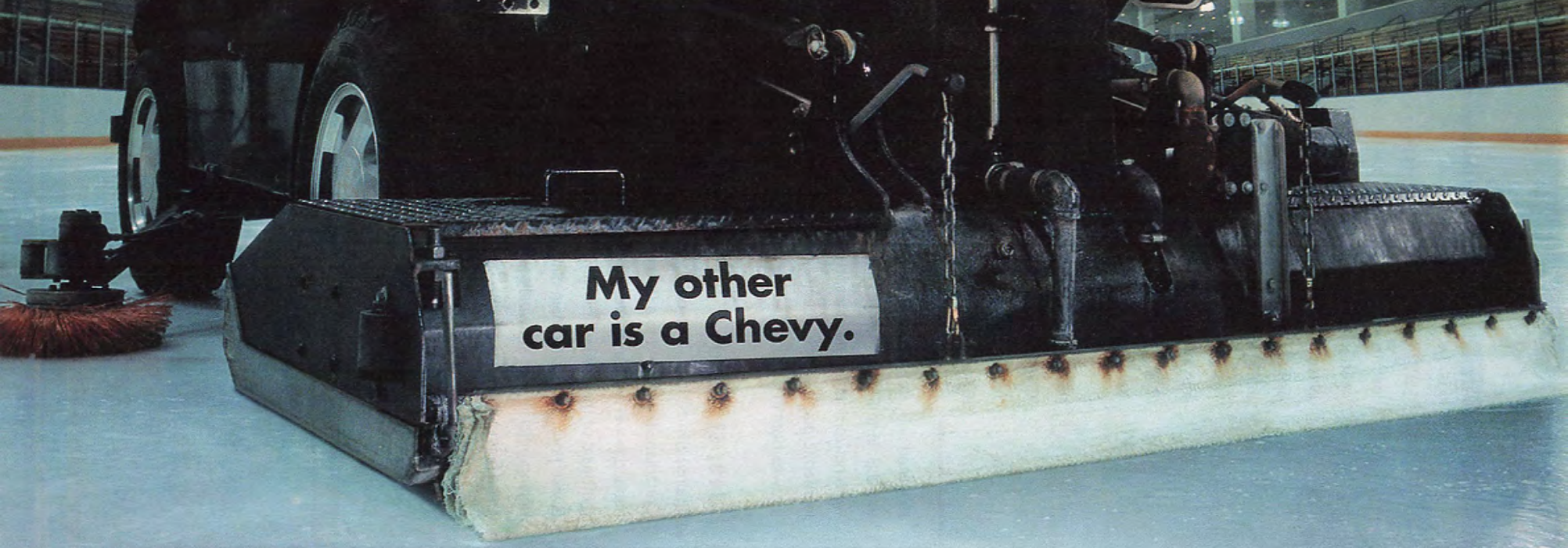

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1920, ANTWERP *"Every single player was a perfect acrobat."*

1920, ANTWERP The inaugural Olympic ice hockey tournament was part of the 1920 Summer Games. It was played by seven-man teams, not the six of today, and each match had two 20-minute periods, with no substitutions. If a player was injured, the opposing team had to pull one of its players. The Europeans were in awe of the North American style of play. The *Stockholms-Tidninger* wrote of the Canada–United States match, won by Canada 2–0, "Every single player on the rink was a perfect acrobat on skates, skated at tremendous speed without regard to himself or anyone else, jumped over sticks and players with ease and grace, turned sharply with perfect ease and without losing speed, and skated backwards just as easily as forwards. And during all this, the puck was held down on the ice and was dribbled forwards by means of short shoves of the stick."

1924, CHAMONIX The final match between Canada and the U.S. was a rough battle that saw Canada's Harry Watson knocked cold after only 20 seconds of play. Watson recovered, however, and, with blood in his eyes, scored the first two goals in what proved to be a 6–1 victory.

1928, ST. MORITZ Canada was represented by a team of recent University of Toronto alumni, which had won the Canadian championship competing as the Varsity Grads.

1932, LAKE PLACID Having already lost to Canada 2–1, the United States needed a victory in the rematch to force a playoff for the gold medal. The Americans seemed to be in good shape with a 2–1 lead in the final minute. However, with 50 seconds to play, Romeo Rivers shot a bouncing puck into the net to tie the score. After three scoreless overtimes, Canada was declared the tournament winner.

1936, GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN Great Britain ended Canada's Olympic undefeated streak at 20 in the semifinals, when Edgar Brenchley scored a rebound goal in the final period for a 2–1 victory. The Britons remained unbeaten by surviving a 0–0 triple-overtime tie with the U.S. in their final match. Nine of the 12 British players were native-born but had moved to Canada as children and learned to play ice hockey there. A 10th player, Gordon Dailley, was born in Canada and served in the Canadian army.

1948, ST. MORITZ The final match pitted Canada against Switzerland. Two days earlier the Czechs and the Canadians had played to a 0–0 tie. Consequently, Canada needed to win by at least two goals to take the gold medal on the basis of the goal differential tiebreaker. About 5,000 Swiss perched on mountain cliffs and watched the game, pelting officials with snowballs when they disagreed with a call. Their enthusiasm did little good, as the Canadian team tallied a goal in each period and won 3–0.

One member of the Czech team, Jaroslav Drobny, later became a famous tennis player, winning Wimbledon in 1954. Drobny died earlier this year.

1928, ST. MORITZ *Toronto's graduates gave a lesson in hockey.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DOUG KEITH

1952, OSLO Canada won its first seven games, and a final 3–3 tie with the United States guaranteed the championship. The Americans were nevertheless thrilled by the outcome because it meant they would finish second instead of fourth. The U.S. team wasn't popular with the spectators because of its rough play. Three American players–Joseph Czarnota, Kenneth Yackel and Andre Gambucci–spent more time in the penalty box than any of the other eight teams.

1956, CORTINA These Games marked the first Winter appearance of athletes from the U.S.S.R. The Soviet team dominated the hockey competition, winning seven games and outscoring opponents 40–9. Almost unknown at the time was the fact that the Soviet victory marked a triumph over tragedy. In 1950, virtually the entire national team had perished in a plane crash near Sverlovsk. The Soviet government suppressed news of the tragedy and assembled a new squad that won the 1954 world title. The Soviets' leading scorer in Cortina was Vsevolod Bobrov, who had missed the 1950 crash because he traveled by train. The extraordinary Bobrov placed third in voting as the greatest Russian athlete of the 20th century (behind soccer goalie Lev Yashin and wrestler Aleksandr Karelin). He also competed in the 1952 Summer Games in soccer.

1948, ST. MORITZ *Swiss rage at the refs had a snowball effect.*

1964, INNSBRUCK *Father Bauer had his team turn the other check.*

1960, SQUAW VALLEY The United States was a heavy underdog when it faced the defending champions from the U.S.S.R. in the medal round. Early in the first period, though, the Americans drew first blood when Bill Cleary scored on a pass from his brother, Bob. The Soviets tied the score a minute later and then took a 2–1 lead at 9:37. Their advantage held through most of the second period until Billy Christian, with an assist from his brother, Roger, fired a shot past the Soviet goalie. The teams continued to fight on even terms for the next 24 minutes until, with five minutes to play, the Christian brothers combined for another goal. From then on Jack McCartan heroically protected the U.S. net, while the partisan, overflow crowd screamed with joy. It was the first time the United States had beaten the U.S.S.R. in ice hockey.

All that stood between the U.S. team and the Olympic championship was an 8 a.m. game the next day against the same Czechoslovakian team it had beaten to open the tournament. But the Americans were so emotionally spent they were unable to sleep, and they arrived at the arena exhausted and tense. The Czechs wasted no time, scoring their first goal in only eight seconds. After two periods, Czechoslovakia led 4–3. During the break, Nikolai Sologubov, the Soviet captain, entered the U.S. dressing room to give the Americans some advice. Unable to speak English, Sologubov pantomimed that the players should inhale oxygen. A tank was obtained, and the revived Americans returned to the ice envisioning the gold medals almost within their grasp. After nearly six scoreless minutes, the U.S. team went on a rampage, as the Clearys and Christians scored six straight goals to win 9–4. The same team that had lost to the Warroad

(Minn.) Lakers had now won the Olympic gold medal.

1964, INNSBRUCK During the hard-fought Canada-Sweden match, Sweden's Karl Öberg bashed the Canadian coach, Father David Bauer, a Basilican priest, on the head with his stick. Father Bauer, who also recruited and coached the 1968 Canadian team, ordered his players not to retaliate. They grudgingly obeyed and won 3–1.

1988, CALGARY ***Like Dewey Defeats Truman, the Soviet demise was exaggerated.***

1968, GRENOBLE The heavily favored Soviet team had suffered a shocking 5–4 defeat against Czechoslovakia, the U.S.S.R.'s first loss since 1963. This meant the gold medal would be determined by two games between teams with 5–1 records: Czechoslovakia versus Sweden, and the U.S.S.R. against Canada. The Czechs would get the gold if both they and the Soviets won. However, the overcautious Czechs, suffering a letdown after their emotional upset of the Soviets, fell behind Sweden 2–1 late in the second period. They managed to tie the match in the final period, but that was all. The game ended in a 2–2 draw, while the Soviets beat Canada 5–0 and took the gold medal.

1972, SAPPORO For the first time since the Winter Games began, Canada did not take part in the ice hockey tournament. The Canadians withdrew from international amateur competition in 1969 because they objected to facing the professional amateurs of the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries. Sure enough, the Soviets and Czechs won the gold and bronze medals, while the U.S. claimed the silver.

1976, INNSBRUCK The tournament was thrown into confusion when Czechoslovakia's captain, Frantisek Pospisil, was chosen for a random drug test after a win over Poland. The team trainer immediately admitted that Pospisil had been given codeine to combat a viral infection. The International Olympic Committee expelled Pospisil and ordered the game against Poland declared null and void. The final announcement was delayed, so as not to spoil the drama of the winner-take-all game between Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. The Czechs led 3–2 in the final period, but with five minutes to play, Aleksandr Yakushev tied the score. Twenty-four seconds later Valery Kharlamov knocked the puck into the net again to give the U.S.S.R. its fourth straight set of ice hockey gold medals.

1980, LAKE PLACID The 1960 and 1980 U.S. squads were remarkably similar. Both were patchwork teams whose success was completely unexpected. Both teams put together a series of upsets and come-from-behind wins, culminating in a dramatic victory over a favored Soviet team followed by one final comeback performance against a lesser opponent, which almost spoiled the whole drama.

In 1980, nine of the U.S. players were from the University of Minnesota, as was the coach, two-time Olympian Herb Brooks. Known as The Khomeini of Ice Hockey, Brooks was a fanatical disciplinarian who told his young team (average age 22), "Gentlemen, you don't have enough talent to win on talent alone." Instead they played 63 exhibition games, including a final match three days before the Olympics opened against the same Soviet team that had beaten the NHL All-Stars. The young Americans were crushed

1992, ALBERTVILLE ***After a close look, Germany had a close loss.***

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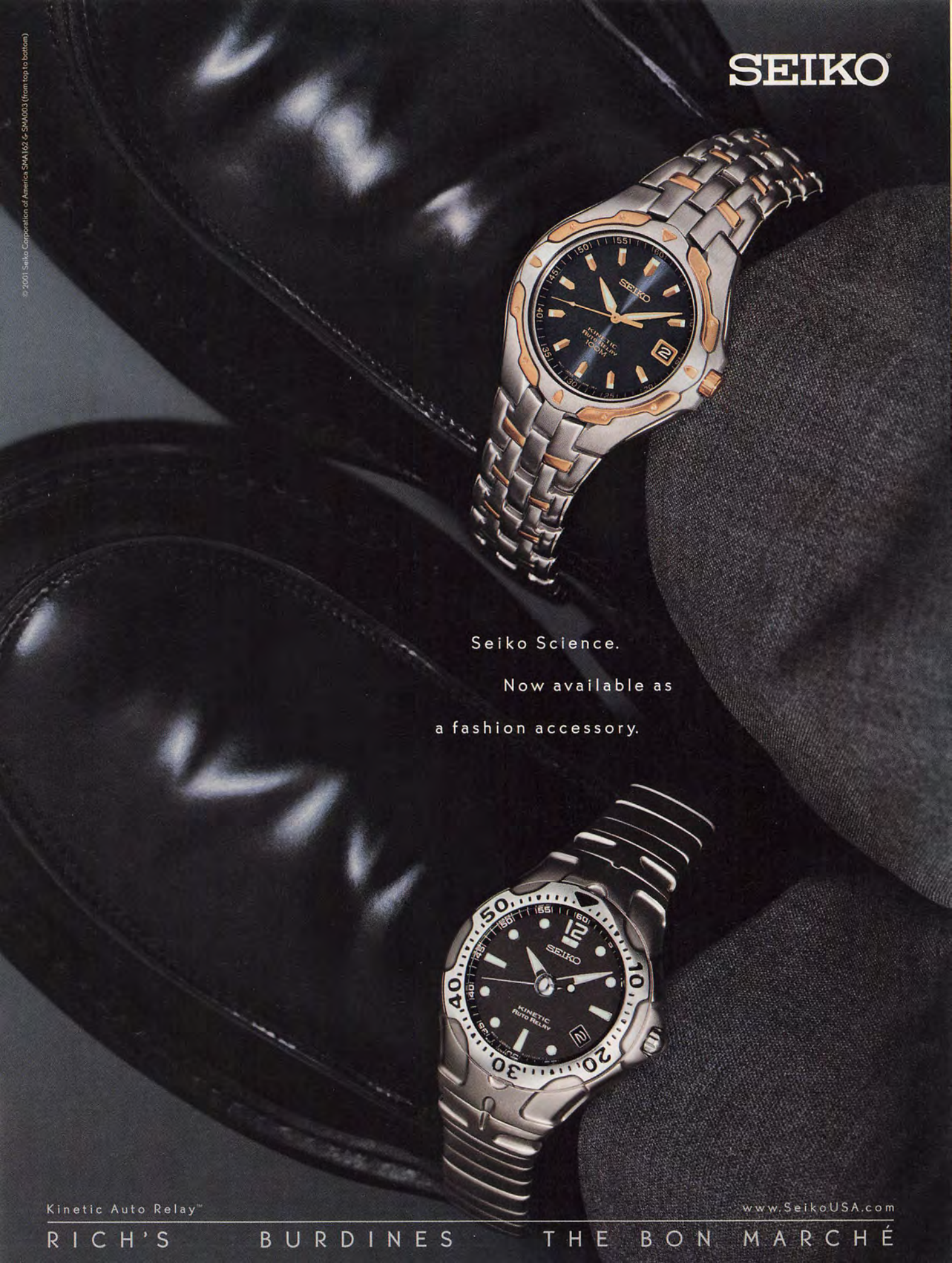

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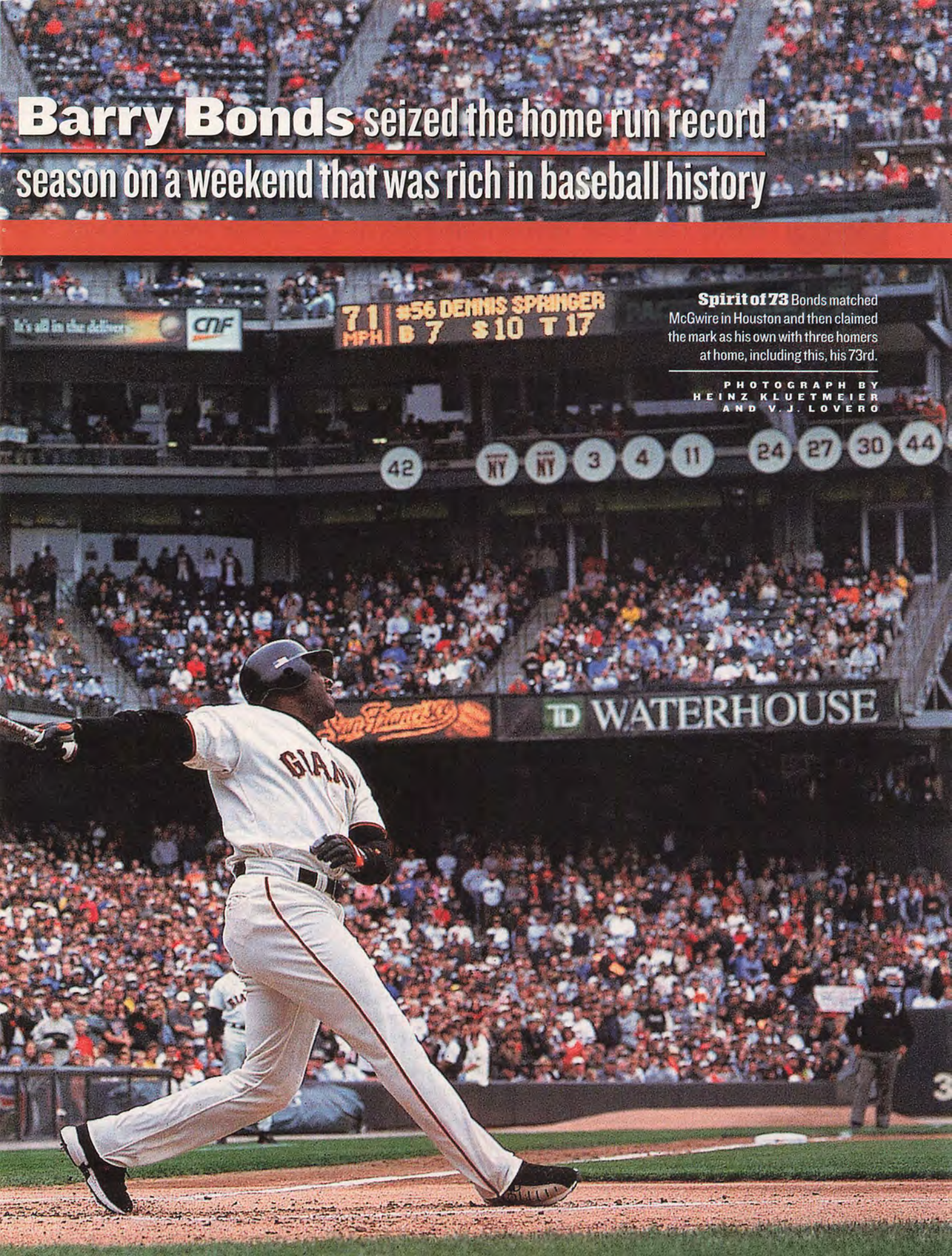
Barry Bonds seized the home run record season on a weekend that was rich in baseball history



Spirit of 73 Bonds matched McGwire in Houston and then claimed the mark as his own with three homers at home, including this, his 73rd.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HEINZ KLUETMEIER AND V.J. LOVERO

BY JEFF PEARLMAN

VETERAN Los Angeles Dodgers reliever Mike Trombley, who knows a thing or two about big hits, was sitting in the visiting clubhouse at Pacific Bell Park in San Francisco last Friday afternoon, sipping a cup of coffee while watching a Jerry Springer highlight video. Six years ago, while pitching for the Minnesota Twins, Trombley allowed Eddie Murray's 3,000th hit. Three years ago, he gave up the 36th of Mark McGwire's record-setting 70 home runs that season. How embarrassing would it be, he was asked, to surrender Barry Bonds's record-breaking 71st homer? Trombley stopped drinking and turned away from the video high jinks. "Embarrassing?" he said. "You must be kidding me. You're pitching against a team in a major league pennant race in a packed stadium against one of the greatest hitters who's ever played the game. There's nothing embarrassing about it. It's special."

Although Chan Ho Park, the sullen Los Angeles righthander who a couple of hours later would give up not only Bonds's record-breaking 71st home run but his 72nd as well, might have disagreed with Trombley, it was hard to argue the point. Bonds, capping perhaps the greatest offensive season in baseball history, had done something special—and breaking the home run record was only a part of it.

In the final weeks of the season he'd been asked to (in no particular order):

- help provide entertainment for a nation in dire need of diversion;
- lead the San Francisco Giants in a come-from-behind drive for a playoff berth;
- smile and expound for a vast press corps that he had usually shunned;
- watch ball four after ball four after ball four after. . . ;
- play while mourning the death of friend and former bodyguard Franklin Bradley, who died on Sept. 27 from complications during abdominal surgery;
- worry about his impending free agency;
- catch and pass McGwire.

It wasn't easy. In the Giants' three-game set against the Houston Astros last week, Bonds, who entered the series with 69 homers, was walked eight times in 14 plate appearances. The ultimate disgrace came in the third game when, with his team trailing 8–1, Astros manager Larry Dierker ordered that Bonds be intentionally walked. The move enraged San Francisco's players, many of whom, despite their dislike of Bonds, wanted to see him break the single-season home run mark. "In that situation," said Jeff Kent, the Giants' second baseman, "you throw your best stuff and try to get Barry out. You don't intentionally walk him."

At last, in the ninth inning of that game, with San Francisco leading 9–2 on the way to a 10–2 win, Houston rookie lefthander Wilfredo Rodriguez challenged Bonds, who swung and missed at the first offering, a 95-mph fastball. As he had done all season Bonds didn't waste many swings this night. After missing high with another fastball, Rodriguez threw Bonds a 93-mph meatball, and Bonds pounced. As the ball exploded off his bat, he tossed away his piece of black timber, lifted both arms and set off on a Barry Trot (read: slow and cocky) around the bases. He'd dedicated the 70th to Bradley, and it was clear how much coming through for his friend meant to him. Said Bonds, "To be able to say I wanted to do something in my heart and [actually do] it was really, really meaningful."

Oddly, the emotion of number 70 never returned, even as Bonds, supported by a sold-out Pac Bell crowd, surpassed McGwire the following night. When he approached the plate for his first at bat, in the bottom of the first, the Giants—in need of a win to stay alive in the National League playoff hunt—were already trailing the Dodgers 5–0. There was a buzz, but not a *buzz*. The crowd was loud, but not *loud*. Bonds's dinger, a 442-foot shot off Park that landed in the rightfield arcade (and in the paws of Jerry Rose, a season-ticket holder from Knights Landing, Calif.), cut the deficit to 5–1. When Bonds hit his second, a 407-foot launch to centerfield, the Giants were behind 8–4; he closed the gap to three runs. The game, which L.A. won 11–10, lasted a *Gone with the Wind*–like 4 hours, 27 minutes. Two records were set this night. One (most homers in a season) was celebrated. The other (longest nine-inning game in major league history) was painfully endured.

Following both homers Bonds rounded the bases with little outward glee. When he crossed home plate after number 71, he pointed upward (in Bradley's honor) and picked up his 11-year-old son, Nikolai, a San Francisco batboy. Bonds's teammates gathered around, patted him on the head and quickly dispersed. There was one semi-noisy, extended curtain call. Bonds hugged several family members seated behind home plate. Then—nothing. "Now batting, number 21, Jeff Kent. . . ."

"When you lose a big game, it takes some of the immediate luster away," said Kent. "Barry will be able to appreciate this one day. We all will. It's historic, a great achievement. But being eliminated from the playoffs—that bruises the fun."

Three years ago, when McGwire and Sammy Sosa were locked in a race to eclipse Roger Maris's 37-year-old record of 61 homers, the nation found itself im-

HEINZ KLUETMEIER

With his season Bonds had done something special—

Batmen Eleven-year-old Nikolai provided a happy homecoming for his record-smashing father.

mersed in a hardball lovefest. Maris's widow and children embraced McGwire as if he were a long-lost cousin. More often than not fans were happy, eager even, to return the home run balls for nothing more than a handshake, a photo and a couple of tickets.

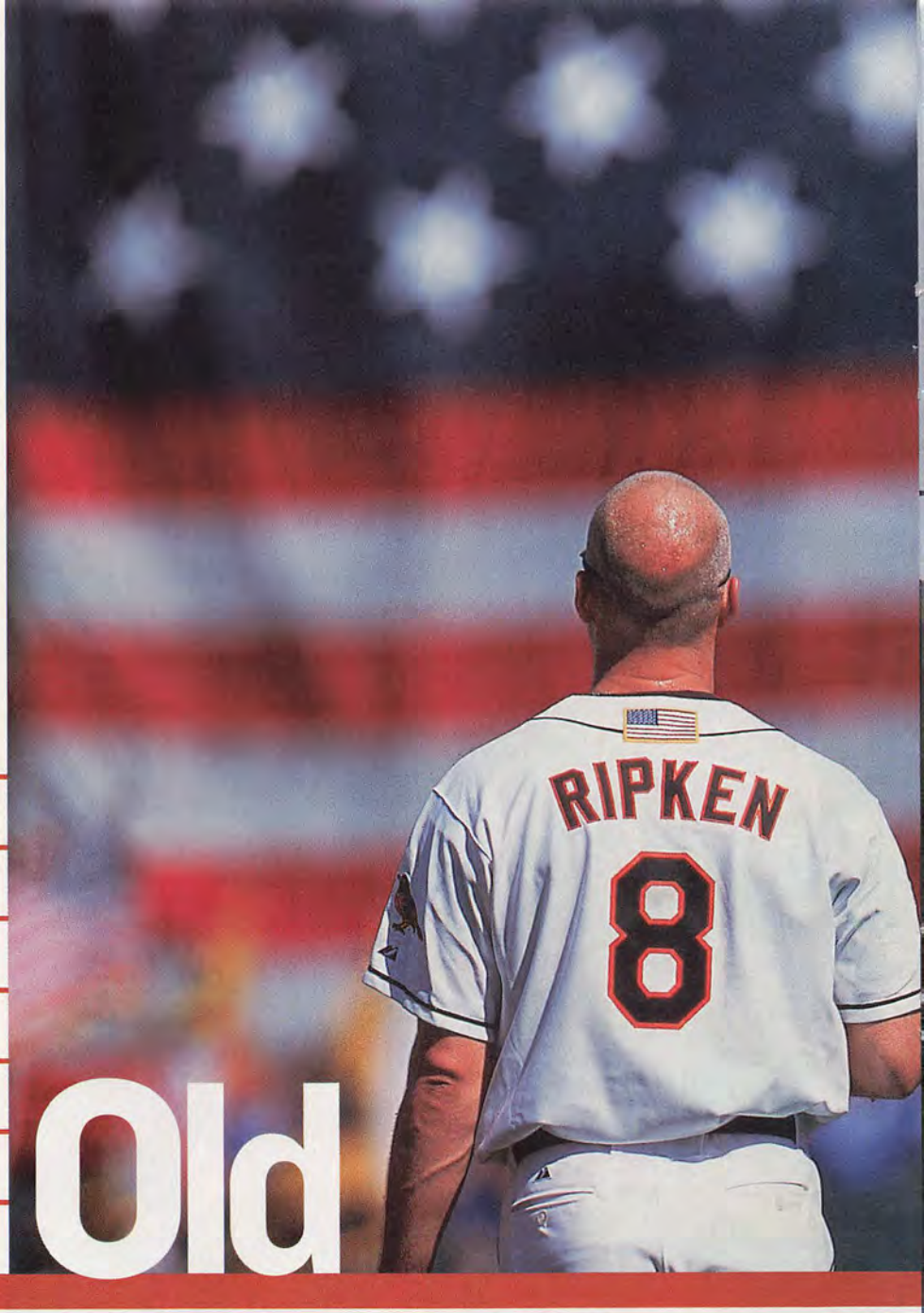
No more. On Friday in San Francisco there was no McGwire, no Sosa, no Maris family and no commissioner. Bud Selig was in San Diego to celebrate the Padres' Tony Gwynn (retiring after a brilliant career) and Rickey Henderson (who had just broken Ty Cobb's 73-year-old record of 2,245 career runs and was on the verge of getting his 3,000th hit). Even Barry's father, Bobby, was absent, playing in his charity golf tournament in Bridgeport, Conn. Of 100 rightfield fans SI surveyed before the game, 94 insisted that should they be lucky enough to snag the grand prize, it would go to the highest bidder—be it Bonds, eBay or Todd McFarlane, the eccentric *Spawn* cartoonist who had purchased McGwire's 70th ball for $3 million. Give the ball away? "Ha!" said J.C. Corzo, a 26-year-old construction worker who held a mitt in his left hand and a $9 standing-room-only ticket stub in his right. "I'm going to buy me 50 acres of land in Kentucky and a couple of ATVs." Alas for J.C., he would head home empty-handed.

To his credit, Bonds insisted that winning—not the record—was his main concern. Thus there he was, after the loss, sitting on a dugout step, staring into nothingness, eyes moist, shoulders slumped. Maybe he was thinking of his lost friend. Maybe of his last game as a Giant—a distinct possibility for a man who would soon become a free agent, commanding $18 to $20 million per year. Maybe he was just sad. Yes, Bonds later admitted, the record was nice and meaningful and something he would treasure. Most of all, however, he wanted to find himself in his first World Series, to have a chance to prove wrong those who consider him a prime-time choker (Exhibit A: his .196 lifetime postseason average).

What the new home run king, who would add a valedictory 73rd in Sunday's meaningless season finale, failed to realize was that he had already proved them wrong. In the heat of a million-watt spotlight, Barry Bonds had come through. □

and breaking the home run mark was only one part of it.

BY RICHARD HOFFER



Old

A pair of greats, Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn, whose allegiance to the game and their teams was unflagging, got farewell salutes

AND OFF they went, not quite arm-in-arm, given that a continent divided them, but conjoined nonetheless in their twin devotion to work. Which two other players have done as much over the course of two decades to promote the ideal of duty as Cal Ripken Jr. of the Baltimore Orioles and Tony Gwynn of the San Diego Padres? Which one other player? That they left baseball within a day of each other (after having reached the big leagues on these very same teams within a season of each other) was a nice touch and convenient for lessons of constancy. We aren't likely ever again to enjoy such an example of double-barreled disparate durability.

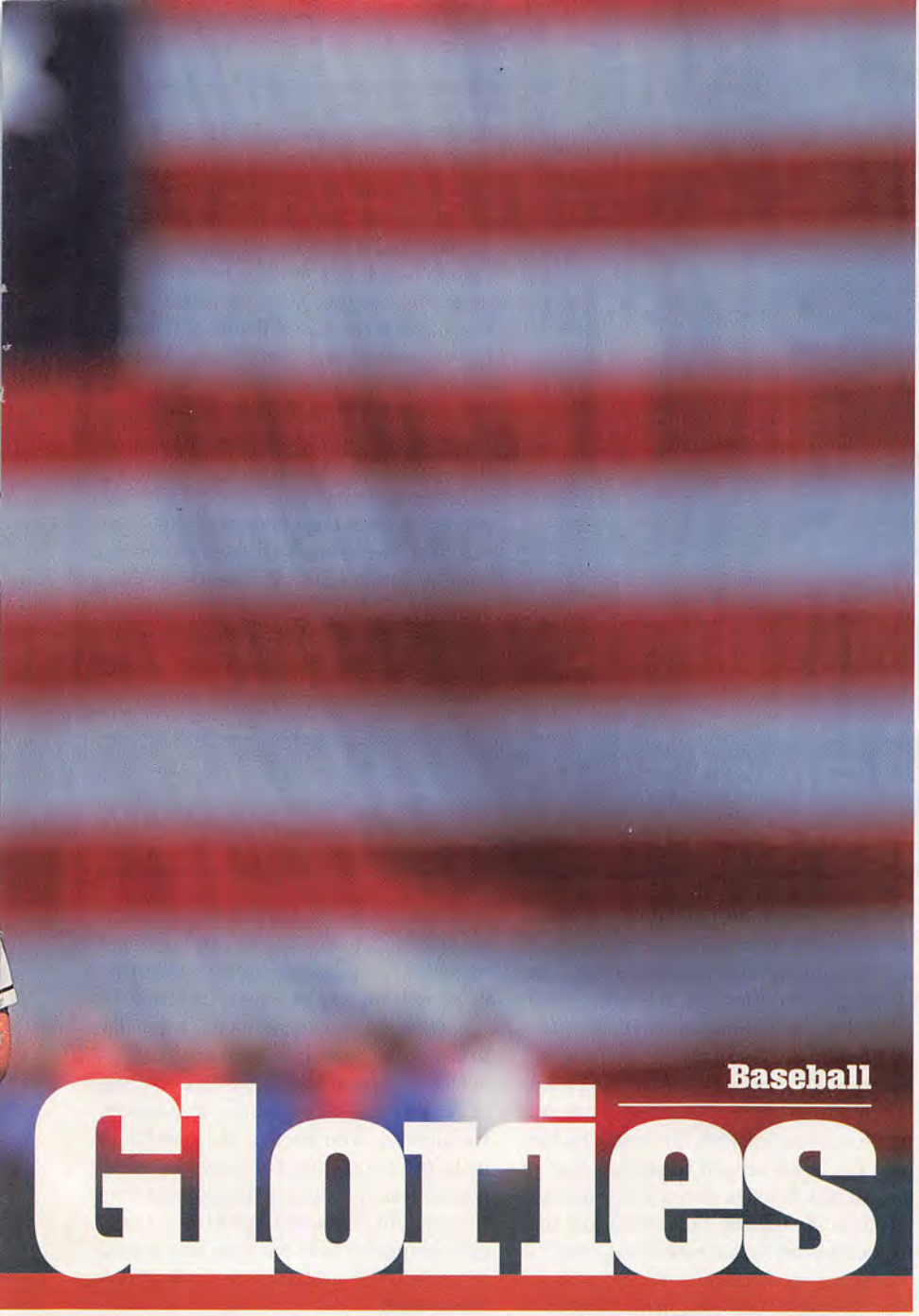
They were more different than alike, of course. Aside from the timing of their careers and the extravagance of their retirement parties, the two 41-year-olds followed opposite base paths. The more reserved Ripken revolutionized the shortstop position, demonstrating that middle infielders could produce more than nicely turned double plays. His major-league-record 345 home runs as a shortstop (86 of his 431 homers came as a third baseman) will always be overshadowed by his record-shattering 2,632 consecutive games played. Still, that first stat is no less astonishing, the first inkling that power hitting and deft defense might be combined at shortstop.

The squeaky-voiced Gwynn was the driven singles hitter, so humiliated by those two out of three tries in which he failed to hit safely (the specter haunting many a Hall of Famer) that his life was formed around the idea of contact. On the road, long after night games had ended, he drew shut the blackout curtains in his hotel room and rewound tape on the VCR he lugged around, fast-forwarding past lunging, embarrassing and mortifying appearances until he found—one time out of three, at least—the reassuring crispness of bat upon ball.

As a consequence Gwynn's 3,141 hits, nearly all in the service of average, produced eight National League batting championships. He batted less than .300 only once, in his rookie year of 1982, and ended with a lifetime .338 mark, 17th best in history. Ripken may have been more fastidious about his attendance, but he was far the more reckless of the two at the plate. His nearly identical 3,184 hits were value-added by comparison, which is why he ended up eight batting championships behind Gwynn but two MVP awards ahead.

Nonetheless, it was appropriate to celebrate their leave-taking together, and not just because they both exited last weekend in what seemed like rolling waves of cere-

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHUCK SOLOMON



Signs of the times Despite balding pate and woes at the plate, Ripken, 41, enjoyed a banner night during his finale on Saturday.

Baseball

Glories

mony, pomp piled upon circumstance as baseball began shutting down for the year. Whatever these guys did, they did it every day, stroke for stroke, for a longer time than most of their fellows were remotely capable of. They didn't grow bored with the idea of hitting, say, .358, a mark Gwynn attained in 1993, or playing in more games consecutively than anyone else ever had. What Gwynn and Ripken shared was the desire, or maybe a need, to do it again. So Gwynn, the next season, would hit .394, and Ripken, after breaking Lou Gehrig's "unbreakable" record, played another 502 straight.

It's a formidable personality who these days recognizes the challenge of repetition, the honor of work, the demands of a game that don't decrease with longevity or experience but increase instead. Who needs it? Who needs it after 20 years?

Because, apparently, only Gwynn and Ripken still did, there was the decision to offer recognition of retirement beyond the normal parting gifts, even for athletes. For Ripken this meant an elaborate and emotional farewell before a capacity crowd at Camden Yards. No stop was left unpulled. For Gwynn, who also had the benefit of a sold-out home crowd, at Qualcomm Stadium, the send-off was a bit more restrained, a lot less noticed. It reflected the difference between being a contact hitter and a slugger, as Gwynn himself had explained. "It annoyed me for a long time," he said the year after he made a good run at .400 yet finished seventh in the MVP voting, "but I'm getting the picture."

Ripken's career was the more captivating of the two, anyway, because of his consecutive-game record. He would have been an important figure without it—he is, after all, one of only seven players to have more than 3,000 hits and 400 home runs—but the buildup to Gehrig's record in 1995 became a national mania, as if the long-overlooked discipline of punching in had suddenly been restored in America. Ripken, by virtue of showing up every day, became the poster boy for blue-collar workers, although even in '95 baseball was several levels removed from factory work.

He was treated more like retiring royalty last Saturday night before, during and after the meaningless game between the fourth-place Orioles and the second-place Boston Red Sox. The orchestration of the event, which seemed to include Ripken's final on-field performance only as an afterthought, was complicated and dramatic, involving vintage video ("I'm only thankful," Ripken said, "that my prom picture didn't show up there"), vintage audio (the theme from *The Natural*), vintage players (Baltimore's lineup from his first big league start, on Aug. 12, 1981, was trotted out, except for shortstop Mark Belanger, who died in '98) and one vintage car (Ripken took a victory lap after the game in a '61 Corvette).

It was so staged that it was hard to tell the ceremony from a certain soft-drink commercial that features Ripken (who annually earns $6 million in endorsements) walking off an empty field with his daughter, Rachel. However, inasmuch as the evening involved Ripken's family, it felt authentic. Certainly it was a jolt when Ripken was directed to escort his mother, Vi, to the first base dugout and uncover a plaque of his father, the former Orioles coach and manager, also named Cal, who died two years ago. And certainly it was fun when, in the postgame press conference, eight-year-old son Ryan asked, "Were you sad?"

Said Cal Jr., "Are you trying to make me cry?"

The capper Gwynn couldn't grace his valedictory with a trademark hit, but he conveyed his usual warmth to the crowd.

momentum, it became impossible for the club to bench him, and there were times when he might have deserved pine. Gwynn, as is the case with any contact hitter, was sniped at for selfishness, looking for his average above all else. It's too bad that the grumbling must be mentioned, because, if for anything else, these guys have stood for sharing.

Ripken, though gone gray, remained a rollicking clubhouse presence who spent postgame hours under the outfield lights signing autographs. "Why not?" he'd always say. His family was asleep—what better to do? Gwynn, whose cherubic personality finally took shape in his ballooning body, was right to the end one of the most

Gwynn's more restrained send-off reflected the difference between being a contact hitter and a slugger.

Ripken had steeled himself for the moment, beginning in June when he announced his retirement, but he still wasn't completely prepared. "I said I could put off these feelings until later in the year," he said. "As later in the year approached, that was harder to do."

The night lacked the heroics of his All-Star Game performance in July, when, having been selected out of respect for his legacy and not his sub-.250 batting average (he finished at a fading .239), he homered and was named the game's MVP. Against Boston last Saturday night he went 0 for 3 and looked increasingly peeved as the night wore on, as if the game somehow mattered beyond the ceremonial aspects.

The futility provided an appropriate bookend, though. When he first popped into the lineup in 1981, he endured a horrible slump, similar to this year's season-ending 2-for-48 skid. Maybe what mattered was what happened in between.

Gwynn's retirement party had the same basic elements: fanfare, baseball highlights narrated by Bob Costas and the appearance of the 1982 Padres, spreading out from a rightfield gate like ghosts. Because it all happened after the game, though, it felt low-key in comparison to Ripken's.

Like Ripken's, Gwynn's final game ended with a whimper, overshadowed by teammate Rickey Henderson's 3,000th hit, in the first inning, which prompted a bench-clearing celebration. By the time Gwynn pinch-hit in the ninth—he no longer trusted himself to play rightfield, so bum had his right knee become—with the Padres trailing the Colorado Rockies 14–5, not much tension was left. Gwynn, who batted .324 in his second straight season of limited play, failed to steer a first-pitch fastball into the leftside hole. With just that flick of the wrists, his career was over.

The two move on now: Ripken to build a giant baseball academy, in his hometown of Aberdeen, Md., that will feature scaled-down replicas of six big league fields; Gwynn up the hill to San Diego State, to coach his alma mater's baseball team and, not coincidentally, his son, Anthony, a sophomore outfielder. Those swerves into amateur baseball are fitting for these two players. Besides celebrating the dignity of work, the other trait they had in common was generosity of spirit.

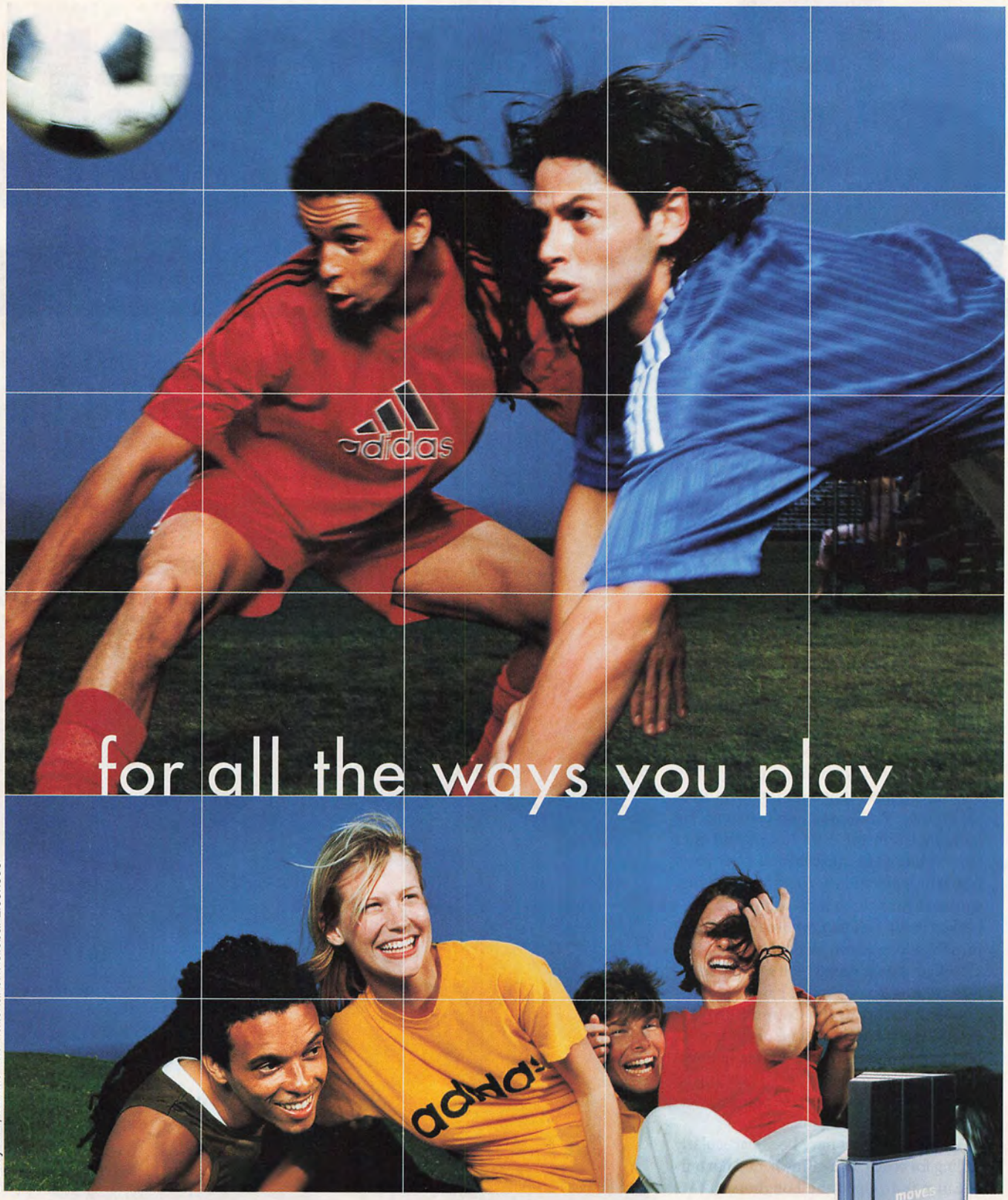
Over the years each attracted his critics, with almost identical complaints. Ripken, it was charged, was an egomaniac whose selfish pursuit of Gehrig's record might have gotten in the way of the Orioles' best interests. Once his quest had gained true

available players in baseball. Would a selfish man often hamstring his earning power by telling the Padres at contract time that he planned to stay in San Diego forever?

On Sunday, which presumably was a day to have all to himself, Gwynn cajoled Henderson into noon batting practice—typical of Gwynn, not so routine for Henderson. Henderson, who needed the one hit to make the 3,000 club, didn't even intend to play for fear of deflecting the spotlight from Gwynn, but Gwynn talked him not only into taking the field but also into special BP as well. "He wanted to see my hit," Henderson said.

So Ripken and Gwynn finished in character, together, two guys who have been lifelong antidotes to the modern-day athlete's self-involvement, two guys who found the fun in work. Remember Ripken's wondering at the cynicism that attended his record? "If you could play every day," he said, "wouldn't you?" Remember Gwynn on Sunday, his day, seeking out second-year Rockies centerfielder Juan Pierre, who on Saturday had reached 200 hits for the season? "You're going to have a great career," Gwynn told Pierre, who seemed almost paralyzed by the attention he was getting. "You've just got to smile more." □

STEPHEN DUNN/ALLSPORT



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Boomer Sooner

Led by the hard hitting of strong safety ROY WILLIAMS, Oklahoma stopped Texas in its tracks

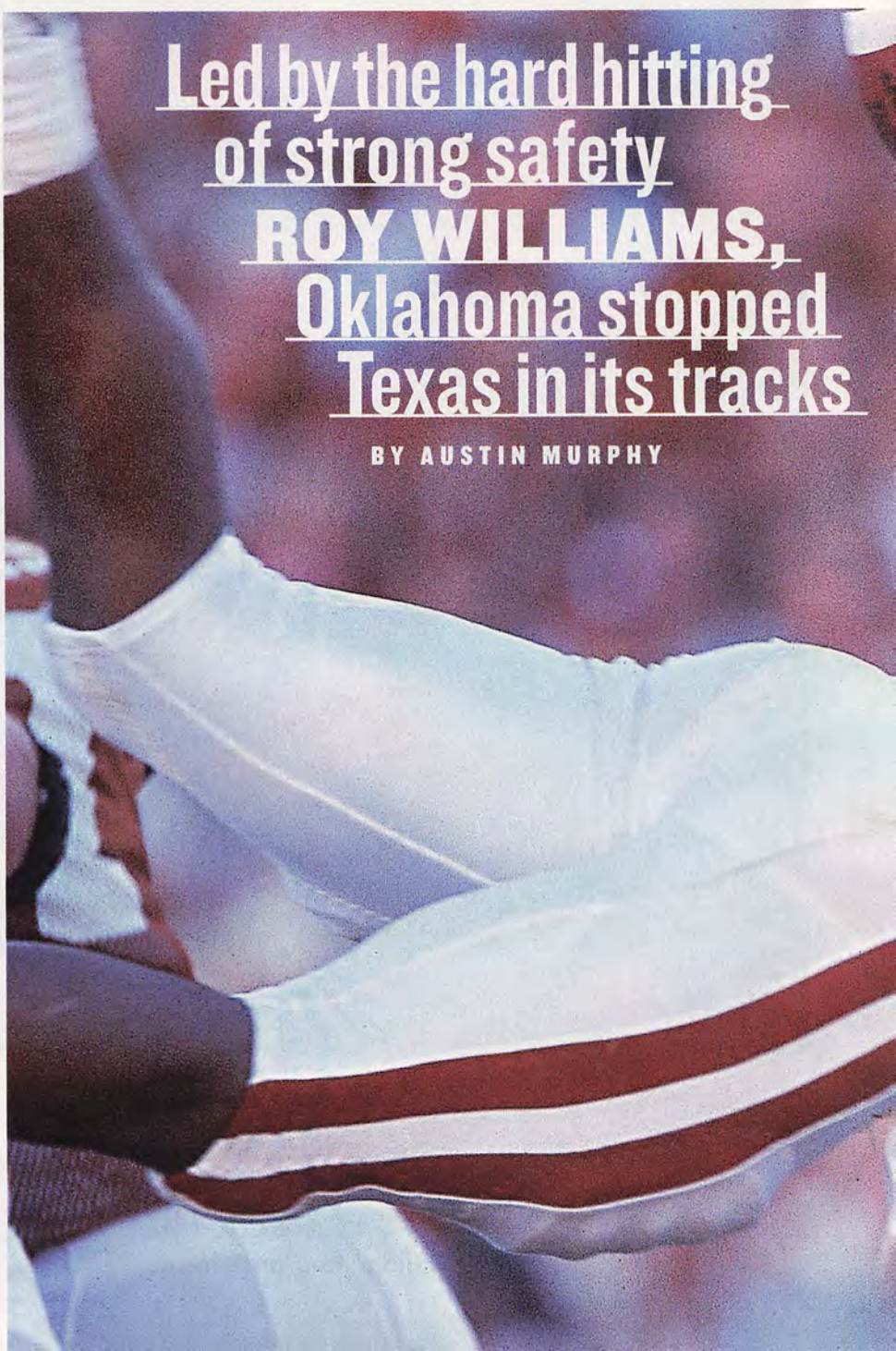
BY AUSTIN MURPHY

IT IS AN unwritten rule of football that all blitzes shall have highly macho, vaguely silly handles, and this one was no exception. The blitz that essentially ended the 96th Red River Shootout was named Slamdog. It called for Oklahoma strong safety Roy Williams to shoot the gap between the left guard and tackle. Having done so, however, Williams found himself facing Texas tailback Brett Robin. The last time Williams had blitzed, earlier in the fourth quarter, he had attempted to hurdle the blocking back, and it hadn't gone well. Williams had taken a foot in the groin, and Longhorns quarterback Chris Simms had scrambled past him for 11 yards.

"Don't leave your feet!" Sooners defensive coordinator Mike Stoops reminded Williams when he called that blitz again with 2:06 left, Oklahoma nursing a 7–3 lead and Texas pinned on its own three-yard line. Williams didn't listen. He launched himself over Robin and into Simms, hitting the quarterback as his passing arm was coming forward. The ball squirted into the hands of middle linebacker Teddy Lehman, whose two-yard return for a touchdown made the score 14–3.

Williams then rubbed salt in the wound, intercepting Simms's next pass to seal the Sooners' victory at the Cotton Bowl and extend their winning streak to 18 games, best in the nation. The defending national champions have beaten the last six Top 10 teams they've faced despite being underdogs in five of those games.

Texas's loss must have been particularly galling for coach Mack Brown, and not only because it dropped the Longhorns (4–1) from No. 5 to No. 11. Brown appears to have hit a wall in his attempt to bring his pro-



Air force In a game dominated by defense, Williams's flying hit on Simms led to the touchdown that sealed Oklahoma's win.

 PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BIEVER

gram into contention for a national title. Since his arrival in Austin three years ago Brown has restored pride in Texas football. He is 31–12 and has recruited some of the best talent in the country. The only thing he hasn't done is win big games. (Brown's Longhorns are 3–8 against Top 10 teams.) The grumbling that has emanated from fans and alumni since last year's 63–14 Red River rout will now grow into howls of outrage.

This was the year Texas had a clear shot at the national championship. Its schedule was a dream (no Kansas State, no Nebraska), and its young talent—Simms and wideouts B.J. Johnson and Roy Williams (no relation to Oklahoma's Roy Williams)—had matured. The running game, which had been lost, was found: The "thunder and lightning" combination of freshman sensation Cedric Benson and redshirt sophomore Ivan Williams had amassed 593 yards in four games. Simms had spent countless hours over the summer throwing to what was billed as one of the most dangerous receiving corps in the nation.

After putting up gaudy numbers in its first four games against teams that were a combined 7–13, the Texas offense sputtered against Oklahoma. The Longhorns rushed for 27 yards while Simms threw four interceptions and was sacked five times. One could not help thinking, as the Texas offense spun its wheels, that Longhorns senior quarterback Major Applewhite, the 1999 Big 12 offensive player of the year who is known for his grit and resourcefulness, would have mustered more than a field goal with such weapons at his disposal. Asked after the game if he consid-

ered inserting his backup quarterback, Brown answered curtly in the negative.

Even as he has labored to avoid a quarterback controversy this season, Brown has bent over backward to make Applewhite feel a part of the team, discussing strategy with him on the sideline and telling anyone who will listen that Applewhite has a job on his staff the minute he finishes playing. Nonetheless, members of Longhorn Nation will demand to see him in a role other than Brown's assistant-in-training.

Whoever is taking the snaps, Texas will have to wait another year to anoint itself a contender. Oklahoma's stunning romp in last year's game launched the Sooners' title run. It also exposed the Longhorns as an overrated collection of solo acts that was less than the sum of its parts. Brown made changes in the off-season. After naming Simms the full-time starter, the coach overhauled the offense. For the first time since Ricky Williams left after winning the Heisman Trophy in 1998, Texas worked to establish the running game. Brown's desire for offensive balance led to the emergence of redshirt sophomore tailback Ivan (Diesel) Williams, who came into Saturday's game averaging 5.7 yards per carry. The team awaiting Oklahoma in the Cotton Bowl was tougher, better balanced and more cohesive than the squad the Sooners embarrassed a year ago.

In the end it didn't matter. Oklahoma, using a scheme similar to the one with which it handcuffed Florida State to win the national championship last January, shut down the Longhorns by controlling the line of scrimmage and taking away the long ball. To neutralize Texas's deep threats—Johnson and the other Roy Williams—the Sooners often played five and six defensive backs. Normally that makes you vulnerable to the run. Normally you don't have an athlete like Oklahoma's Roy Williams on your roster. Williams, a 6-foot, 215-pound junior, is the key to the Sooners' superb nickel defense. He's the rare strong safety who covers like a cornerback and plays the run like a linebacker. "He's the best defensive player I've played against," said Simms after the game.

"He always finds a way to be where the ball is," says Sooners coach Bob Stoops. "Run, pass, everything. He's got a great feel for the game."

Asked to discuss that feel, Williams puts it this way: "Sometimes I'll be on the field and it's like everything slows down, and I feel untouchable. It's like in a movie, when you know something's about to happen." It may be a premonition that he'll intercept a pass. (He's picked off seven as a Sooner.) More often it's an early warning that someone is about to get his mouthpiece knocked out. Williams doesn't only make a ton of tackles—he has 45 this season, second highest on the team—but he's also one of the most punishing hitters in the nation. He established his reputation in his second game, against TCU in '98. Williams was playing on the kickoff team when, he recalls, a return man "cut right into me." Williams knocked an ear pad out of the player's helmet and knocked him out of the game.

"Roy's been bringing the thunder since we were seven years old," says Oklahoma wideout Damian Mackey, who grew up down the street from Williams in Union City, Calif. When Roy was nine, he knocked a running back unconscious in a youth league game. When the boy came to, Roy's mother, Deborah, made

The Sooners shut down the Longhorns by controlling the line of scrimmage and taking away the long ball.

AL TIELEMANS

Playing out his option Griffin hit pay dirt in the second quarter for what turned out to be the game's only offensive touchdown.

1994, LILLEHAMMER ***Salo's diving, sprawling save saved the day for Sweden.***

by the Soviets 10–3. In their Olympic rematch, however, the U.S. stunned the Soviets 4–3. Afterward the team went to the dressing room and sang *God Bless America*, even though the players couldn't remember all the words. Meanwhile, Coach Brooks had locked himself in the men's room with his emotions. "Finally I snuck out into the hall," he said, "and the state troopers were all standing there crying." The next day America's Miracle on Ice culminated with a 4–2 gold medal victory over Finland.

1984, SARAJEVO The days leading up to the 1984 Olympic ice hockey tournament were filled with turmoil and confusion because of eligibility issues. Professionals were not allowed to compete in the Olympics, but disagreement raged as to who was and was not a pro. The absurdity of the situation was put into sharp focus when the results were finally posted. First place went to the U.S.S.R. and second place to Czechoslovakia. Both nations fielded teams made up entirely of paid players. But because the countries were Communist, the players' paychecks came from the government and not privately owned clubs. Thus, by the IOC definition, they were all amateurs.

1988, CALGARY In the weeks leading up to the Calgary Olympics, the international press was filled with articles declaring the end of the Soviet dynasty. Perhaps the U.S.S.R. was still favored, but only by a slight margin. Once the tournament began, however, it was clear nothing had changed. The Soviets cruised through the preliminary round, then crushed Canada 5–0 and Sweden 7–1. They did lose 2–1 to Finland in their final match, but by then they had already clinched first place. The dynasty was very much intact.

1992, ALBERTVILLE Canada should have had an easy victory against Germany in a preliminary-round match, but it turned out to be a thrilling and memorable contest. Trailing 3–2, the Germans scored with

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2:22 to go and sent the game into sudden-death overtime. When neither team scored after 10 minutes, a five-man shoot-out was required. Canada took a 2–0 lead, but the Germans made their last two shots to put the match into a new phase: sudden-death shoot-out.

Eric Lindros shot first for Canada and scored. Peter Draisaitl came up for Germany. If he scored, the shoot-out would continue. If he missed, Canada would advance to the semifinals. Draisaitl squeezed the puck through goalie Sean Burke's legs, but Burke managed to slow it down with his pads. The puck rolled toward the goal, wobbled and landed on the line. According to the rules, a goal can't be scored unless the puck crosses the goal line. Canada escaped a possible major upset by one inch and went on to win the silver medal.

1994, LILLEHAMMER In 1994, the gold medal also came down to a shoot-out, between Canada and Sweden. With the score still tied after Round 1, the shoot-out moved to a modified sudden death, with each team taking a shot until one side led.

The Swedes went first with Magnus Svensson, but Corey Hirsch blocked his attempt. With a chance to win for Canada, Petr Nedved shot wide. Then Peter Forsberg attacked to Hirsch's right, slipped the puck back the other way and nudged it just past the goalie's glove and into the goal. Paul Kariya tried to even the score with a high wrist shot, but goaltender Tommy Salo, sprawled on the ice, kicked up his leg and knocked the puck away. Sweden had finally struck gold in its 16th Olympics.

1998, NAGANO ***The U.S. victory was a golden moment for Canada too.***

1998, NAGANO (MEN) Finland knocked out Sweden in the quarterfinals when NHL scoring leader Teemu Selanne scored a pair of third-period goals. The Swedes played without defensive star Ulf Samuelsson, who was discovered to be a U.S. citizen and was disqualified in the middle of the tournament.

1998, NAGANO (WOMEN) After the U.S. beat Canada 3–2, the Americans exploded in wild celebration while the depressed Canadians stood by and watched. Then Canada's Danielle Goyette led her team in the traditional postgame handshake line. The medal ceremony was painful for the Canadians, and yet tough-talking Shannon Miller noted, "When they showed [U.S. forward] Cammi Granato's face on the big screen and the Olympic gold medal going around her neck, my feelings changed quickly. I had a feeling of joy going through my body because I realized that an Olympic gold medal is being hung around a female hockey player."

1998, NAGANO ***Citizen Samuelsson got his walking papers.***

Adapted with permission from The Complete Book of the Winter Olympics, *2002 edition, by David Wallechinsky, published by The Overlook Press, www.overlookpress.com, © 2001 by David Wallechinsky*

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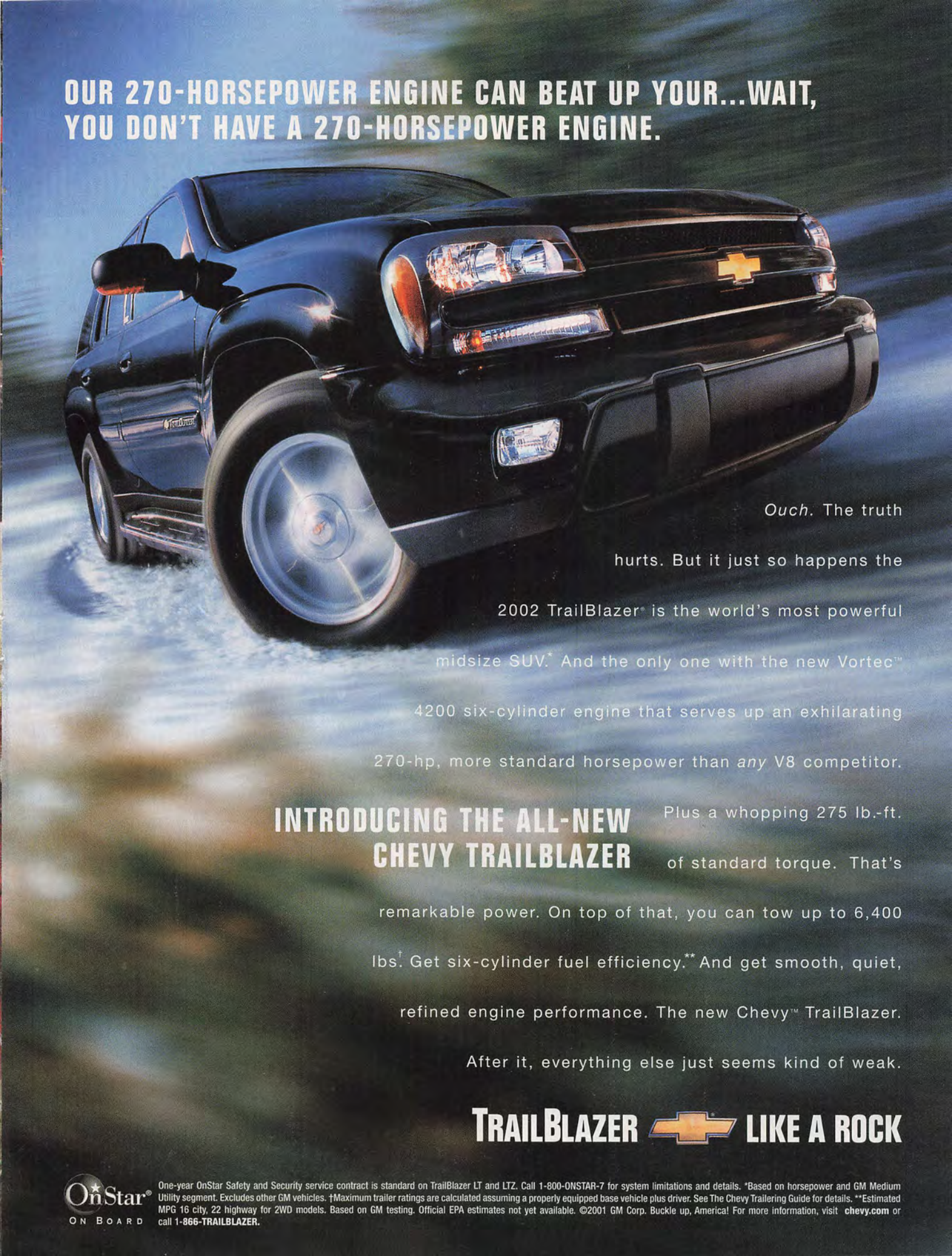

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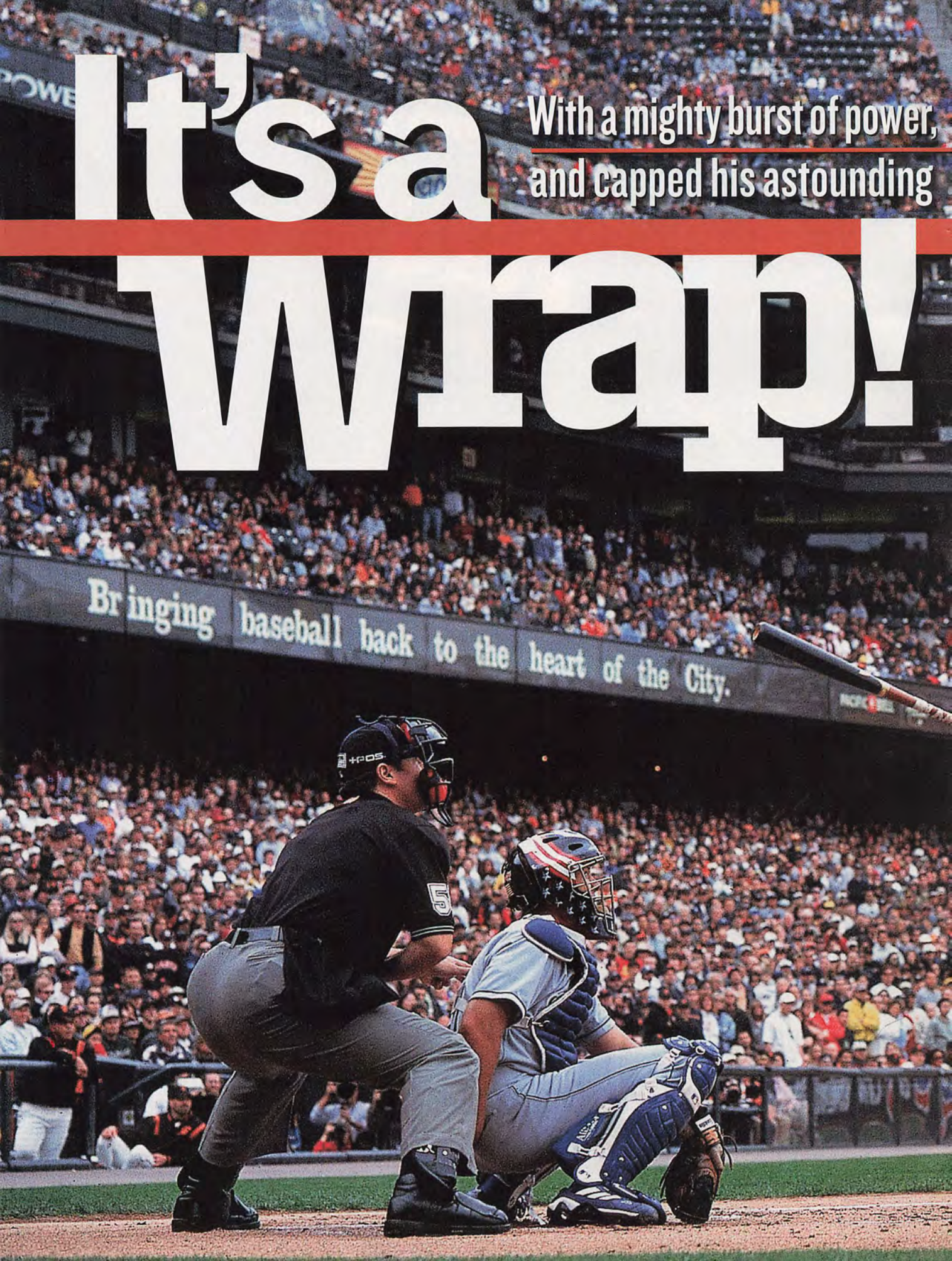
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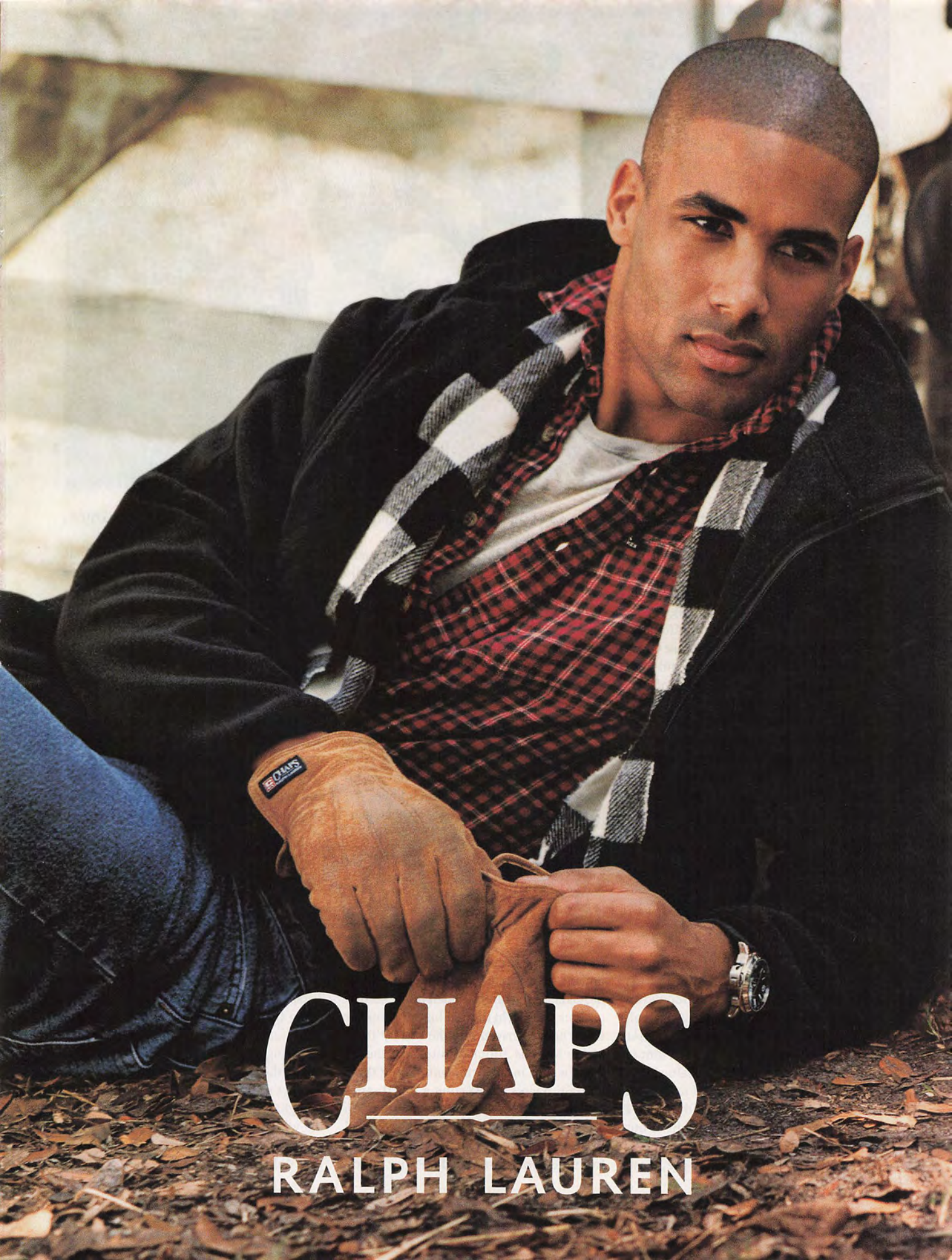
CHAPS
RALPH LAUREN

BOB ROSATO

To the rescue White (18) turned in a gutsy performance at quarterback after Hybl was knocked out of the game in the second quarter.

her son walk over and apologize to the lad.

As a senior at James Logan High, Williams was recruited by Miami, Michigan and UCLA, among others. He chose Oklahoma to join Mackey, his friend and high school teammate. Mackey had been offered a scholarship to Stanford, but he injured a knee late in his senior season, and the Cardinal withdrew its offer. Oklahoma offered scholarships to both Mackey and Williams.

One game after waylaying that TCU kick returner, Williams suffered a back injury, was redshirted and missed the rest of the season, which ended with the firing of coach John Blake. When Stoops and his staff arrived, Williams had ballooned to 235 pounds and couldn't make it through strength coach Jerry Schmidt's winter workouts. Schmidt wasn't exactly a font of compassion when Williams explained that he was nursing a bad back. "If a guy told me he had back pain," Schmidt says, "I took it to mean he was overweight or out of shape. Roy was both."

"That was a tough time for me," says Williams of the weight and the injury. "I felt really lousy."

He responded by losing 20 pounds and making Sooners offensive players feel his pain. When spring football began, Williams lit people up. The coaches were suddenly his friends. "He was running around making every tackle," says Bob Stoops. "It was easy to see he was special."

As befits his extraordinary ability, Williams is on the field with all of Oklahoma's special teams and for every defensive play. In the second quarter on Saturday he scooped up a blocked field goal and returned it 18 yards to the Sooners' 39-yard line. That set up the game's only offensive touchdown.

That drive began with Nate Hybl at quarterback and finished with Jason White under center. White, a sophomore from Tuttle, Okla., came off the bench in the second quarter after Hybl injured his left shoulder when he was driven into the turf by Texas tackle Marcus Tubbs. White gave the offense a shot in the arm, completing three straight passes, converting a fourth-and-two from the Longhorns' 30 on an option play and then lowering his head at the end of an 11-yard scramble. On first-and-goal from the two White called another option and pitched to tailback Quentin Griffin, who ran 17 yards for the touchdown.

The Sooners had chances to extend their lead, but placekicker Tim Duncan shanked a 24-yard field goal early in the fourth quarter. (He also pulled a 42-yarder in the first.) Duncan lined up to try another 24-yard field goal with 2:12 remaining but instead received the snap directly and lofted a pooch punt toward the Texas goal line. Inexplicably, Longhorns safety Nathan Vasher decided to dive and catch the ball at the three rather than allow it to bounce into the end zone for a touchback.

Simms would now have two minutes and six seconds to lead the team 97 yards. He was O.K. with that. The Longhorns had three timeouts, and Simms had his security blanket, 6' 5" Roy Williams of Odessa, Texas. That's whom Simms was looking for when the other Roy Williams took flight and crash-landed on the quarterback's throwing arm, creating the turnover that sealed the victory. "Of course I didn't *want* to start at the three," Simms said, "but I thought, It'll just be a better storybook ending with a 97-yard drive."

It *was* a storybook ending. For the other Roy Williams. □

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Heads Up

After a 16-month layoff, concussion-prone Eric Lindros was rusty but also showed flashes of why the Rangers paid dearly for him

BY MICHAEL FARBER

ERIC LINDROS refuses to look back to the history of concussions that haunts him like Banquo's ghost, to the bad feelings that marked his final years with the Philadelphia Flyers, even to the deft drop pass he left for linemate Theo Fleury on Lindros's third shift as a New York Ranger, a blind pass that was elegant in its simplicity but spoke of endless possibility. The playoff-challenged Rangers may not be the right team for Lindros, but New York is the right town at the right time for him. This is the city of the possible, one that whispers of delicious freedoms even beyond the vows of the Statue of Liberty.

In New York a man has the freedom to find himself or lose himself, to reinvent himself, to rewrite his history. In other times an athlete so good and so noticeable might have had difficulty merely going about his business in New York, but the city has more pressing matters these days, its grief and fortitude a camouflage for its athletes. Lindros will be the center of attention soon enough—"Eric's our most important player," says Mark Messier, the Rangers' captain and a New York icon—but amid the city's stark abnormalcy this fall, Lindros, who had longed to play in his hometown of Toronto, has found a comforting quiet. "I never wanted a carnival," said the 28-year-old Lindros last Saturday. "If I wanted a carnival, I'd go out there."

Laughing, Lindros jerked a thumb in the direction of the rides at Playland, an amusement complex in suburban Westchester County that includes the rink on which the Rangers practice. He was barechested, chatting quietly at his stall in a nearly deserted dressing room the day after his first NHL game since May 26, 2000, when New Jersey Devils defenseman Scott Stevens crumpled him with a shoulder to the jaw as Lindros, head down, entered the offensive zone. Lindros suffered his sixth concussion in 27 months on that hit, and he sat out 2000–01 in a contract dispute with the Flyers.

Against the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday night, Lindros played like a man groping for the light switch. There were flashes of inspiration, like that exquisite pass to Fleury, but they were overshadowed by the awkwardness that tore at Lindros's line, which coach Ron Low ripped up in the third period, using Radek Dvorak in place of the faltering Zdeno Ciger. There was an embar-

Back in business Lindros commands so much respect that his new teammates have voted him an assistant captain.

rassing Alphonse-and-Gaston pass to Fleury that floated into the neutral zone during a power play and a more telling error later in the game, when Ron Francis stripped Lindros of the puck outside the Carolina blue line. That gaffe was compounded seconds later when Lindros made a poor defensive read and lost his check on the third Hurricanes goal.

The lack of timing, dulled instincts and uncertainty about positioning were all unmistakable signs of rink rust, but this was a mere snapshot of a season opener. The most important thing wasn't the dismal small picture—Lindros was −2 in a 3–1 loss—but the encouraging big picture. Given the volumes of well-chronicled bitterness between Lindros and Philadelphia general manager Bob Clarke as well as the thick medical files that explained why Lindros missed 31.4% of the Flyers' regular-season games during his nine seasons in Philly, it was unrealistic to expect him to deliver an instant fairy tale on an October night in Raleigh. "What Eric hasn't done a lot of is move the puck and bust through the holes," Low said last Saturday. "That's been his strong point. After the game he told me that it seemed as if he had nobody to move the puck to."

The Lindros-Fleury pairing is intriguing. After his seamless partnership in Philadelphia with straight-ahead power winger John LeClair, Lindros must get accustomed to a pint-sized maverick who's 82 Nights at the Improv. Fleury, returning from a season aborted last February when he sought treatment for alcohol and substance abuse, is a master of the hockey riff, his unpredictable and often undisciplined style making him as confounding as he is dynamic. He likes to lug the puck, also a principal part of Lindros's game.

Fleury's need to lead the rush, however, might prove to be a blessing. Lindros's critical flaw is his occasional habit of searching for the puck at his feet and leaving himself vulnerable to brain-rattling hits like the one Stevens delivered in Game 7 of the 2000 Eastern Conference finals. There's a degree of hubris in head-down hockey, but the 6' 4", 240-pound Lindros had a simpler reason to adopt that style: He was always the biggest and best player growing up, unlikely to be hurt by the gnats who tried to check him. Although he was superb during the up-tempo but noncontact practices at Team Canada's camp in the first week of September, defensemen at the

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOU CAPOZZOLA

Olympic orientation privately noted that Lindros still sometimes carried the puck with his head down.

After Rangers general manager Glen Sather made the trade with the Flyers in August and signed Lindros to a complicated contract—he's guaranteed $2.3 million this year but can earn as much as $38 million, based on personal and team incentives, if New York exercises its option

looming presence of the NHL's most punishing defenseman. "I was a little surprised Scott was up that high because Johnnie [LeClair] was down the right side, slipping in behind him, all alone," Lindros said. "What I was trying to do when I got dinged was chisel the puck to Johnnie, because if Johnnie gets it, maybe he scores. If I chisel it through, maybe I'm wearing a [Stanley Cup] ring right now."

In the near future any jewelry Lindros wears likely will be bought at retail. The Rangers are composed of disparate parts; they're a team for which the value of the 40-year-old Messier and Norris Trophy defenseman Brian Leetch, but Lindros's name will soon be above the marquee. The Rangers know it; they elected him an alternate captain after their pregame skate last Friday. They have embraced him off the ice—Messier, Lindros's boyhood idol, hosted Lindros at his Manhattan brownstone for three weeks while Lindros looked for his own place—and, more important, on the ice. When New York Islanders goalie Garth Snow elbowed Lindros in a preseason game, Rangers enforcer Dale Purinton rushed to his defense, earning a four-game suspension. "He'll be hit. There's not a player in the game who isn't," Sather says of Lindros, "but if you cheap-shot Eric, you'll pay."

Top shelf After a shaky opening game, Lindros rebounded with a strong effort on Sunday that included his first Rangers goal.

Sather was roundly criticized in New York for trading three young players (forwards Jan Hlavac, 25; Pavel Brendl, 20; and defenseman Kim Johnsson, 25) for a Blue Cross All-Star—albeit one whose 1.356 points-per-game average was second only to Mario Lemieux's among active players. Lindros, though, turned heads and maybe changed some minds on Sunday in his home debut, a 5–4 overtime win over the Buffalo Sabres. He scored on a power-play rebound for his first goal in more than 16 months. He held off a check by center Tim Connolly and nudged a pass to new linemate Andreas Johansson for a goal as time expired

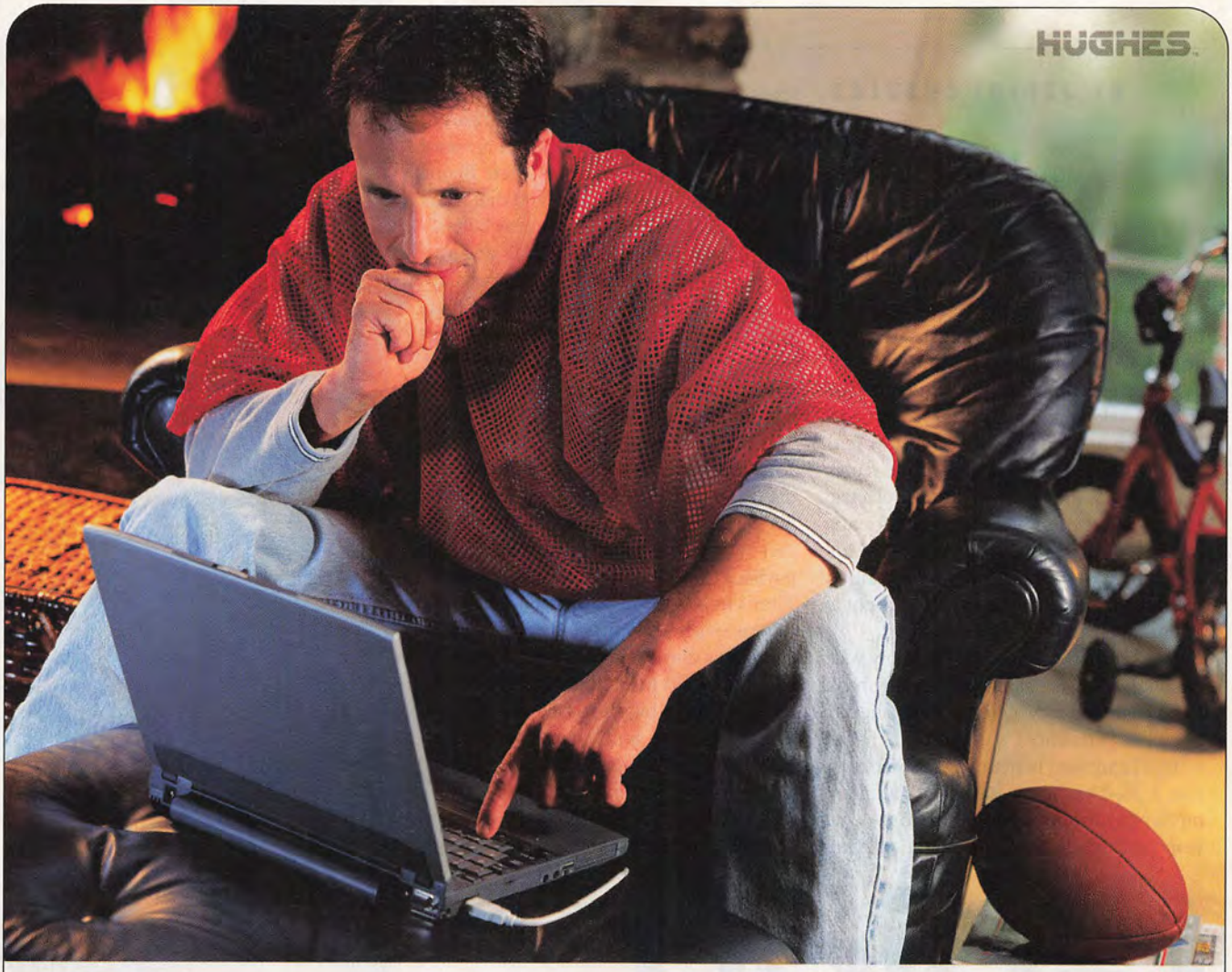
It was unrealistic to expect Lindros to turn the page and deliver an instant fairy tale on an October night in Raleigh.

for each of the next three seasons—the first discussion they had was about Lindros's keeping his head up. "He's working at it," Sather says. "We talked about how he would have a chance to work on his puckhandling, how he could modify his game."

Lindros accepted the counsel—"Any G.M. is going to tell a player who's had a history of concussions that," he says—but he doesn't enjoy sifting through the past. The one time his soft voice had an edge to it during that dressing-room conversation was when he discussed the Stevens hit. Yes, his head was down, but he sensed the players' names exceeds the levels of their games. Like Lindros and Fleury, many others are returning from something or someplace—a near career-ending eye injury for defenseman Bryan Berard, surgically repaired knees for goalie Mike Richter and defenseman Vladimir Malakhov and a sojourn in Slovakia for Ciger, who last played in the NHL in 1996. There will be growing pains as a swell collection of résumés tries to transform itself into a team. If it does, the club will belong to Lindros.

For the moment he's another star on a New York roster that includes the in the second period. He cycled the puck down low and threw his considerable weight around. In the dressing room after having been crunched into the glass by Lindros late in the first period, Sabres defenseman Jay McKee asked partner Rhett Warrener, "How much do you think a body can be squished?"

If this wasn't vintage Lindros, it was only because, as Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff suggested, Lindros still needs more game conditioning. He will get plenty, assuming he holds his head up as proudly as everyone else in New York. □



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BY JEFFRI CHADIHA

Going Nowhere

The Ravens gave the once-mighty Titans a dose of their own

JULI FISHER could no longer tolerate the drab, cavernous office that her husband, Tennessee Titans coach Jeff Fisher, has occupied but never really settled into for the past three seasons. So in late August she redecorated. Gone are the stacks of cardboard boxes, replaced by lush potted plants that sit atop oak cabinets. The space that was vacant on one side of the room now features a black-leather couch and a circular glass coffee table. A metallic-blue electric guitar—a gift from one of Fisher's friends in the country-music industry—leans against a tower of shelves that are filled with pictures and mementos. The room is impressive, but there's one problem.

"We haven't won a game since my wife did all this," Fisher said while leaning back in his chair and surveying the room one day last week. "I told her I want my boxes back."

The Titans had better change something fast. A 26–7 loss to the Ravens in Baltimore on Sunday dropped Tennessee to 0–3, its worst start since 1994, and sent a sobering message to any Titans player who thought the team's woes could be easily corrected. A popular choice to reach the Super Bowl, the Titans are as confused and vulnerable as they have been in Fisher's eight-year tenure.

The Ravens pounded the ball on the ground, dominated with a merciless defense and wore down Tennessee. That pattern should have been familiar to the Titans: It's exactly how they went about building a league-best 26–6 regular-season record over the previous two years. No more. "This is a different team from the one people are used to seeing," Tennessee strong safety Blaine Bishop said after the game, "and that won't change until we find a way to play better."

With quarterback Steve McNair and running back Eddie George struggling with injuries, it's clear the Titans need more playmakers. "We can't expect to win 13 games because we've done it before," says Fisher. "There isn't some archive that we can just go into and pull out the formula for success. We have to relearn all that stuff."

Even the motivational ploys are backfiring. After practice last Friday, Fisher told his players to bring two-by-fours to Baltimore to "lay some wood on the Ravens" as payback for Baltimore's 24–10 upset of the Titans in last season's divisional playoffs. Ravens coach Brian Billick mentioned those comments during his pregame speech, and by game's end the Titans had caught the wrong end of a big stick. George, tight end Frank Wycheck and cornerback Samari Rolle left with injuries. "What is [Fisher] going to say?" Ravens defensive end Mike McCrary said. "They're winless. I would say anything to get my team fired up, too."

Tennessee's problems begin with its offense. The Titans rank 27th in the league in total offense, and their only touchdown in the past two games came on a blocked punt return. They are last in third-down efficiency (16.7%); on Sunday they converted only two of 14 attempts. True, only four of George's 29 career 100-yard games have come before Oct. 1, but he is off to the slowest start of his six-year career, with 154 yards on 51 carries. Against Baltimore he carried 13 times for 26 yards. Off-season surgery on the big toe of his right foot may be hindering him.

So too might the absence of a true fullback. Until they claimed rookie Wes Ours on waivers on Sept. 26, the Titans didn't even have one on their roster. (Ours was inactive on Sunday.) They didn't re-sign Lorenzo Neal after last season and waived William Floyd at the end of training camp,

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BIEVER

Stacked up McNair and George found yards hard to come by against Baltimore's vaunted defense.

only completion to a wideout on Sunday came on a seven-yarder to Kevin Dyson late in the first quarter.

Predictably, Heimerdinger is catching heat in his second year on the job. He attended one of his son Brian's high school football games recently, and after the team scored on a 96-yard touchdown, a fan quipped that the Titans should steal the play. A fan of talk radio, Heimerdinger hasn't flipped to an all-sports station in weeks because he knows what he'll hear.

"We're not making enough plays," says Heimerdinger. "We've been close to breaking some, but something happens, be it a guy stumbling on a run, somebody missing a block or a pass being dropped. Those mistakes will hurt any offense."

Says a front-office executive for another AFC team, "Their offense is predicated on underneath throws, the running game and play-action. If they don't get their running game going, they're in trouble."

The Titans already are experimenting with changes along the line. Bruce Matthews shifted from left guard to center, replacing Kevin Long, who started 16 games last season. Zach Piller, a third-year player, made his first NFL start, moving into Matthews's old spot. Those moves didn't faze the Ravens, whose defense hasn't allowed a 100-yard day by a runner in 41 games. How reluctant were the Titans to run the ball? Facing third-and-one in the third quarter, McNair threw incomplete to George in the flat. In recent years Tennessee wouldn't have thought twice about blasting George into the line.

If things weren't bad enough, Tennessee's typically stout defense wasn't up to the task on Sunday either. Terry Allen (108 yards, one touchdown) led a rushing attack that gained 207 yards, only 23 yards

medicine, leaving Tennessee winless and searching for answers

leaving the lead blocking assignment to Wycheck and fellow tight end Erron Kinney in the H-back role. Offensive coordinator Mike Heimerdinger downplays the loss of Neal, saying he participated in only 25% of the snaps in 2000, but it's apparent the Titans could use another skilled blocker.

"You've got to have a prototype fullback who's going to bang," says Neal, who plays for the Cincinnati Bengals. "They really don't have anyone to do that, so Eddie's going to take more shots. Frank Wycheck is a great tight end, but banging with linemen and linebackers isn't his style."

The passing game hasn't been any better. McNair was misfiring even before he reinjured his surgically repaired right shoulder in a season-opening loss to the Miami Dolphins, and he sat out the Titans' 13–6 defeat by the Jaguars in Jacksonville. His fewer than the Ravens had in their first three games combined.

Life won't get any easier for the Titans; next up is a game in Nashville with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The numbers are daunting: Since 1990, only three teams that started 0–3 have made the postseason. "The playoffs are the last thing on our minds," says left tackle Brad Hopkins. "Our major priority is salvaging this season." □

Raider of the Lost Arts

BY MICHAEL SILVER

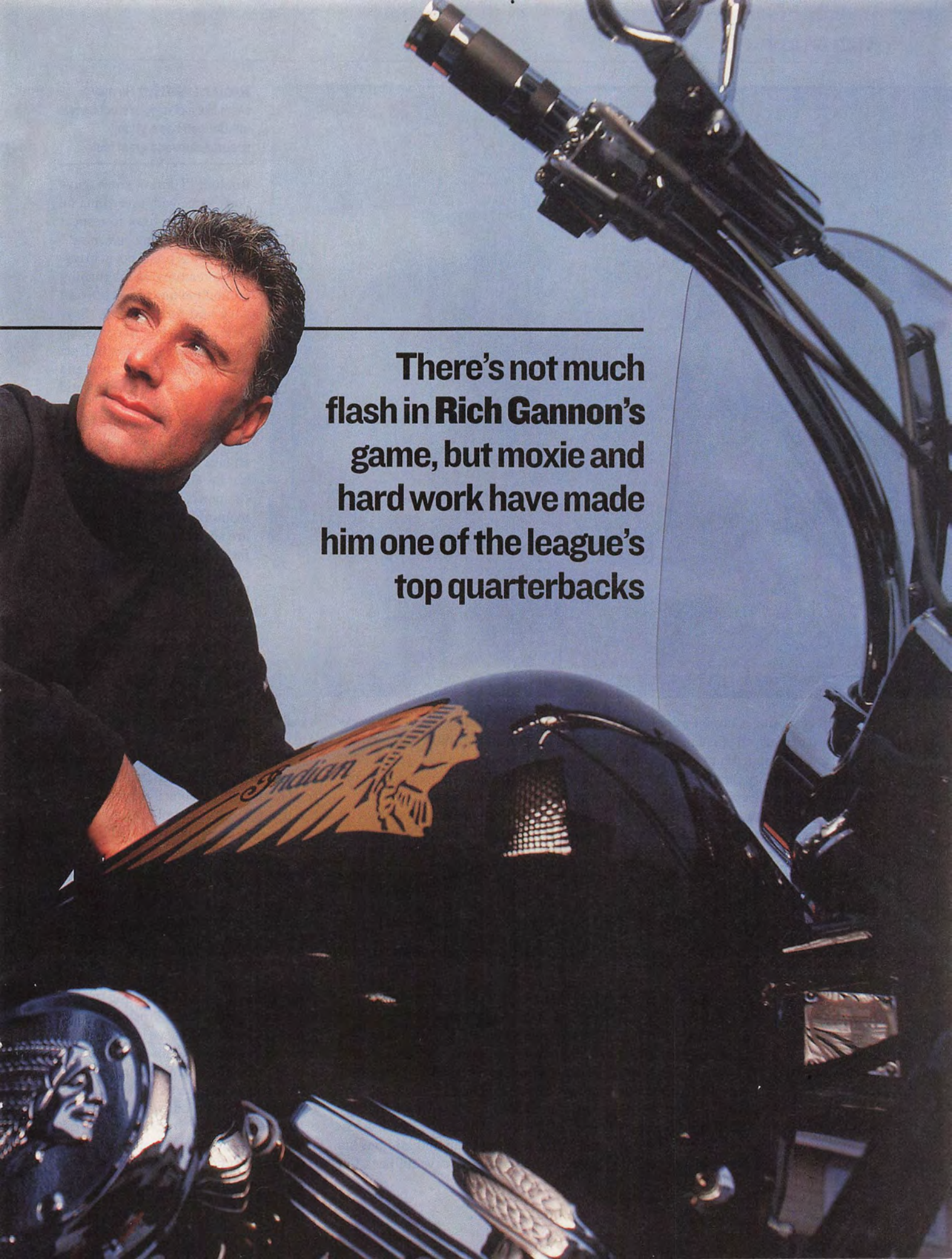
RICH GANNON surveyed the ragtag assemblage—pudgy punks with red baseball cleats, workout warriors in tank tops, old guys with beer bellies and tattered gym bags, pimply poseurs chowing down Double Whoppers, street thugs in long mesh shorts—and thought he must be having an out-of-body experience. Or maybe that's merely what he wished it were, instead of a very real reminder of his inglorious place on the football food chain. Fourteen months earlier Gannon had played quarterback for the Washington Redskins at RFK Stadium. Now, in February 1995, here he was in a public park in suburban Dallas preparing to display his talents at an open tryout for the Canadian Football League's Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

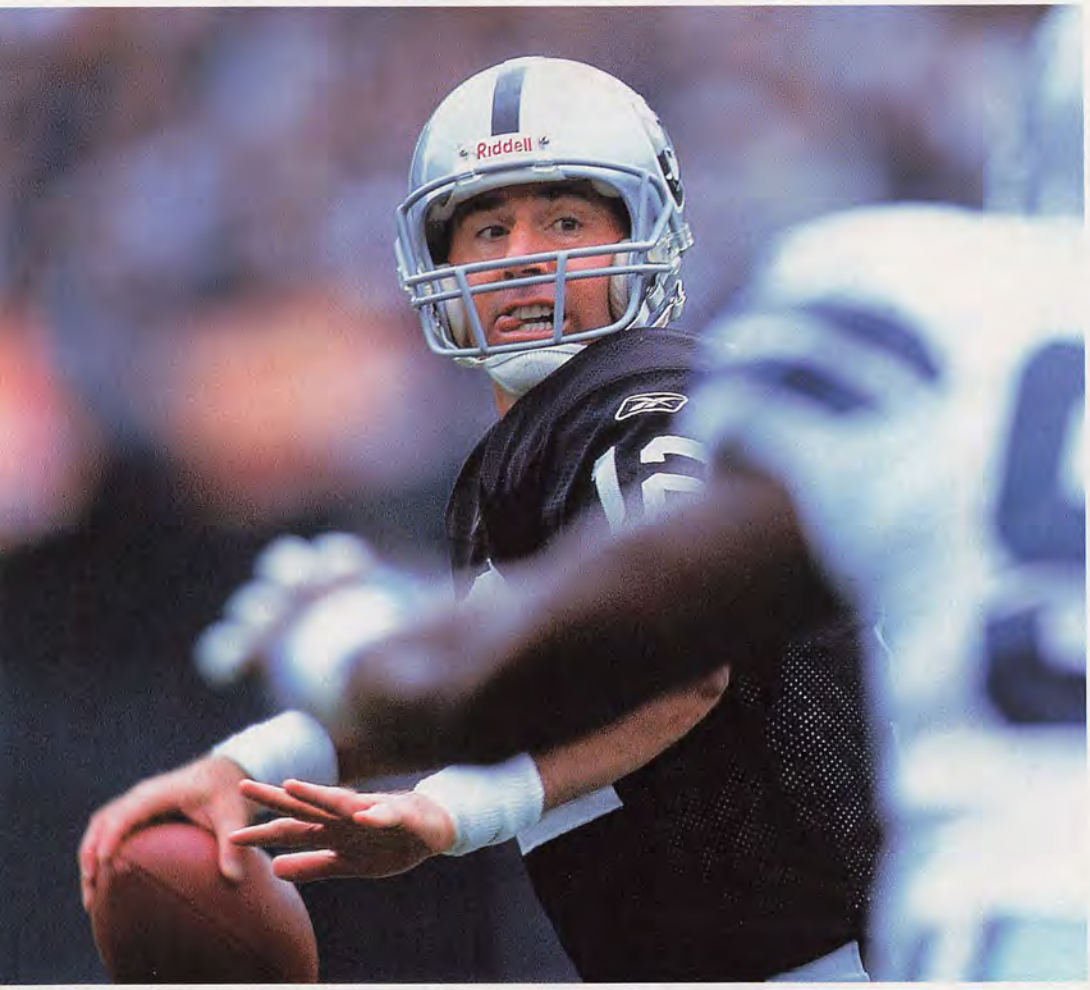
Think *The Longest Yard* meets a high school jayvee team's first practice of the summer, and you're still not there. "It was even worse," Gannon says. "I've never really told anybody the story because it was probably the most humiliating moment of my life. Guys were running here, jumping there, with no apparent rhyme or reason. I remember thinking, Am I really here? Have I entered the Twilight Zone?"

For a player known to erupt over the slightest sign of shoddiness, this was torture. However, with a rapidly shrinking bank account and a daughter on the way, Gannon swallowed hard and finished the workout. The Blue Bombers had wooed him for months, and now Gannon was resigned to making an unwelcome border run. "When I finished that workout, they told me they wanted to sign me," Gannon says. "I said to myself, This is it. This is the alltime low. I'll never get back to the NFL."

Loose Gannon Although he's notoriously intense on the field, Gannon can unwind a bit when he's behind bars—handlebars.

 PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER READ MILLER


There's not much flash in Rich Gannon's game, but moxie and hard work have made him one of the league's top quarterbacks
Indian



Rich in ability He may seem like a classic overachiever, but Gannon has a strong, accurate arm and great feet.

Instead of signing, Gannon went home determined to make one final push for the big stage, which landed him a backup job with the Kansas City Chiefs. For this the Oakland Raiders are grateful. Since being coaxed to Oakland by coach Jon Gruden following the 1998 season, Gannon has helped prod one of the league's sloppiest ensembles into a lean, mean fighting machine. The All-Pro quarterback (2000) serves not only as the Raiders' fiery leader but also as their de facto den mother, snuffing out distractions—he only recently allowed games of pool to resume at the team's Alameda training facility after a hiatus of nearly two years—and venting at anyone who fails to match his focus. The 21st-century Raiders thus have fewer weekday diversions and far more fun on Sundays, as evidenced by last year's AFC Championship Game appearance, the team's first in seven seasons.

Gannon has helped prod one of the NFL's sloppiest ensembles into a lean, mean fighting machine.

On Sunday, Gannon completed 21 of 28 passes for 209 yards and a touchdown to lead Oakland (3–1) to a 28–21 victory over the Dallas Cowboys. With a 99.6 passer rating that ranks him tied for first (with Denver's Brian Griese) in the AFC, the cunning, agile Gannon seems headed for a third consecutive Pro Bowl and is the team's unquestioned MVPP: Most Valuable Party Pooper. "On several occasions Rich has gotten in front of the team and laid out his views rather strongly," says fullback Jon Ritchie. "I know some guys don't agree with everything he says, but they have to respect him for speaking his mind." Gannon has been known to castigate teammates for turning around too quickly on 20-yard back-and-forth sprints. Says Oakland tackle Barry Sims, "Sometimes in practice he'll get mad in the middle of a play and start yelling—with the ball still in his hands."

It's not uncommon for coaches and quarterbacks to engage in heated exchanges, but the G-men, as Gruden and Gannon call themselves, take it to another level. Because they are so close in age—Gruden, the NFL's youngest head coach, is 38, while Gannon turns 36 in December—and temperament, they often go at it like combative guests on *Politically Incorrect*. Pressed for an example, Gruden cites last season's 34–28 overtime victory over the San Francisco 49ers. "Rich wasn't in rhythm, so at halftime I asked, 'Are you O.K.? Do you want me to go with [backup Bobby Hoying]?' " Gruden says. "He went off on me: 'Bleep this, bleep that, you bleepity bleep.' Sometimes something like that snaps him out of his funk." Gannon finished the game with 310 passing yards, including a game-winning 31-yard touchdown throw, and 85 rushing yards.

Gruden would like to see less loose cannon and more loose Gannon, but he's reluctant to meddle with a winning formula. "Every year at our quarterback orientation I tell him his number one weakness is those displays of emotion," Gruden says. "He can say whatever he wants to me—he knows that—but around others, sometimes he'd

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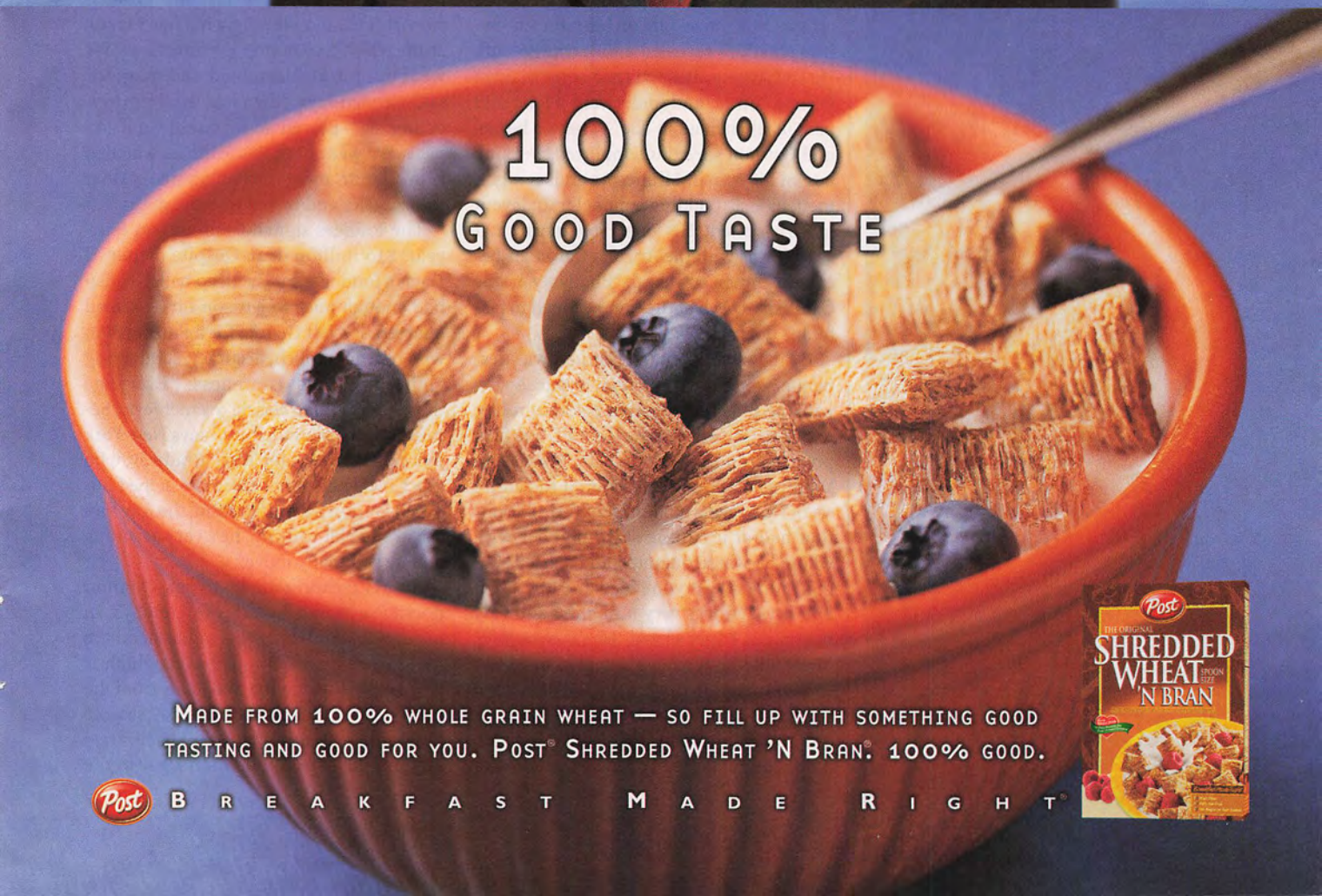
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be better off internalizing. I have to be careful about this because he's an emotional man, and that's one of his qualities I admire most, but I tell him, 'Don't carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. You're a Pro Bowl QB. Enjoy this time.' "

Excessive enjoyment, though, is against Gannon's nature. As a freshman at Division I-AA Delaware, a Belushiesque roommate compelled Gannon to abandon his dorm for an off-campus apartment. Now, having fought his way through a career that has spanned five teams and numerous setbacks, he's determined not to take this opportunity for granted. "I've invested a lot of time and energy," he says, "and one promise I made to Jon and to myself is that if I'm going to go down, I'm going to go down swinging—in a ball of flames."

Paul Hackett and quarterbacks coach Mike McCarthy, improved his timing, footwork and decision-making. It was also then that Gannon began enlisting the services of his wife, Shelley, a daughter of former Vikings running back Bill Brown. "She'd quiz him on formations while they lay in bed," says McCarthy, now the New Orleans Saints' offensive coordinator. "It might not sound romantic, but that's Rich—the ultimate professional from a work-ethic standpoint."

When Elvis Grbac was injured late in the 1997 season, Gannon shone in winning five of six starts, but when Grbac returned, Gannon was benched for K.C.'s divisional playoff loss to the Denver Broncos. After his contract expired following the '98 season, which he'd spent trading places with Grbac as the Chiefs' starting quarterback,

"The girls got him a Prince Ken doll," says Shelley. "He was thrilled."

Gannon's NFL career appeared to be toast after the 1993 season, when his contract with the Redskins expired and a routine arthroscopic procedure on his right (throwing) shoulder revealed a torn rotator cuff. He had surgery, then returned home to Eden Prairie, Minn., and underwent a long and painful rehabilitation. The '94 season began, and Gannon stayed unemployed, working out on his own in Minnesota and, at night, meticulously building a model train layout in his basement. His lone tryout during that season was with the Arizona Cardinals because, Gannon surmised, "Buddy Ryan [the Cardinals' coach at the time] wanted to piss off his quarterbacks."

By the next February, Gannon was desperate enough to attend that tryout session with the Blue Bombers, but before agreeing to bolt to Canada he gave the NFL one final push. Gannon went to the Minnesota Vikings' headquarters, scoured the entire set of NFL media guides, identified 18 teams that had at least one staff member with whom he was acquainted and started calling. "Almost everyone blew me off," Gannon says. "It was very humbling and very frustrating. I'd get a lot of, 'He's in a meeting. May I tell him what it's in regard to?' "

Two candidates emerged, the 49ers and the Chiefs. Gannon chose Kansas City, beat out Matt Blundin for the backup job and, under the guidance of offensive coordinator

Rich told Shelley he would sign with anyone but the AFC West rival Raiders, for whom he had "complete disdain." Gruden won over Gannon during what has to rank as the NFL's coolest-ever job interview. "We went out for Mexican food and margaritas," Gruden says, "then had the limo driver stop at 7-Eleven so we could get a six-pack. We went back to my office, watched film of our most recent game against Kansas City and talked into the night."

The Raiders signed Gannon to a four-year, $16 million deal. Despite owner Al Davis's fondness for the deep ball, Gruden had enough juice to jettison turbo-armed quarterback Jeff George for a journeyman who relied on touch, accuracy, scrambling ability and field awareness. "Everyone thinks Rich is the classic overachiever because of all his intangibles," says New York Jets general manager Terry Bradway, who as a Chiefs personnel executive helped initiate Gannon's signing. "But the guy can throw the ball with zip, he's very accurate, and he can really move."

An MVP candidate last year, Gannon doesn't restrict his battles to Sundays. In his eyes a team's toughness and mood are molded on a continuous basis, which is why he confiscated the pool balls from the team's player lounge late in the '99 season. "I was used to an organized, disciplined system," he says, "and when I got to the

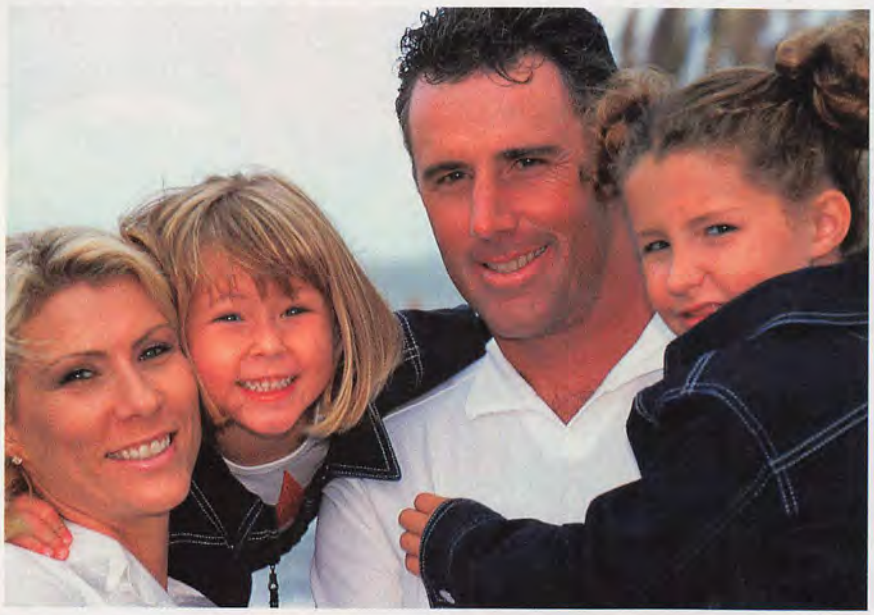
Raiders, guys were showing up late to practice and meetings, and missing curfew, among other problems. Then we had this lounge that was like a big playroom, with a pool table, one of those pop-a-shot basketball hoops and video games."

The noise from the lounge could be clearly heard in the room where Gruden holds his midday meetings with the quarterbacks. "We were cramming for a Thursday game against Tennessee late in the season, and I finally flew off the handle," Gannon says. "I went in and took all the pool balls and put them in a box over my locker."

The following Monday, Gannon stood up in a team meeting and delivered a now famous speech. (It's commemorated by a T-shirt featuring Gannon's face inside the Raider logo.) "I told them to look at guys like Steve Wisniewski, Tim Brown and Russell Maryland and consider why they've been so good for so many years," Gannon says. "It's like, sit next to the kid who keeps getting A's in class; don't hang in back with the dummies. It was a difficult thing to say to my teammates, and there was a group that didn't like what I said. At least two guys told me so, and I know there were more who didn't come to me directly."

Despite Gannon's locker room clout, he's hardly spared intrasquad abuse. It's always an event when he boards the team plane for road trips, because Gannon's wardrobe has been known to include such gems as a multitoned leather jacket featuring the logos of each NFL team. "Dude tries to be down, but it ain't happening," says halfback Tyrone Wheatley. "Sometimes we have to get the fashion police on him. He wears the tightest jeans I've ever seen, and he has that walk like Travolta in *Grease*." Ritchie calls Gannon's look "Minnesota shopping mall, with glam-rock Muzak playing on the sound system."

Imagine what Gannon's teammates might do with this bit of information, courtesy of Shelley Gannon. "We have two daughters [Alexis, 6, and Danielle, 4], and Rich plays Barbies with them," she says. "The girls got him a Prince Ken doll for Christmas, with the little sword and everything. He was thrilled."



Family plan Gannon even reviews plays with his wife, Shelley, seen here with their two daughters, Alexis (left) and Danielle.

Chide him as they might, the Raiders can't fathom life without their leader. Take away Rich and they are poor. Exhibit A: Last January's AFC Championship Game defeat to the Baltimore Ravens in Oakland. After taking shots from defensive linemen Michael McCrary and Tony Siragusa that could have been flagged as personal fouls—"Let's be honest," the 6' 3", 210-pound Gannon says, "defensive line coaches teach players how to take quarterbacks down"—Gannon left the game in the second quarter with a bruised collarbone. The Raiders lost 16–3.

"He means so much to us, even though he drives me nuts sometimes," Gruden says. "But deep down, I know the sumbitch knows I love him." □

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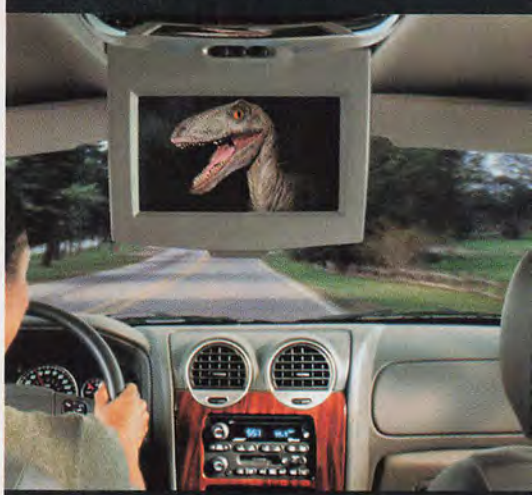

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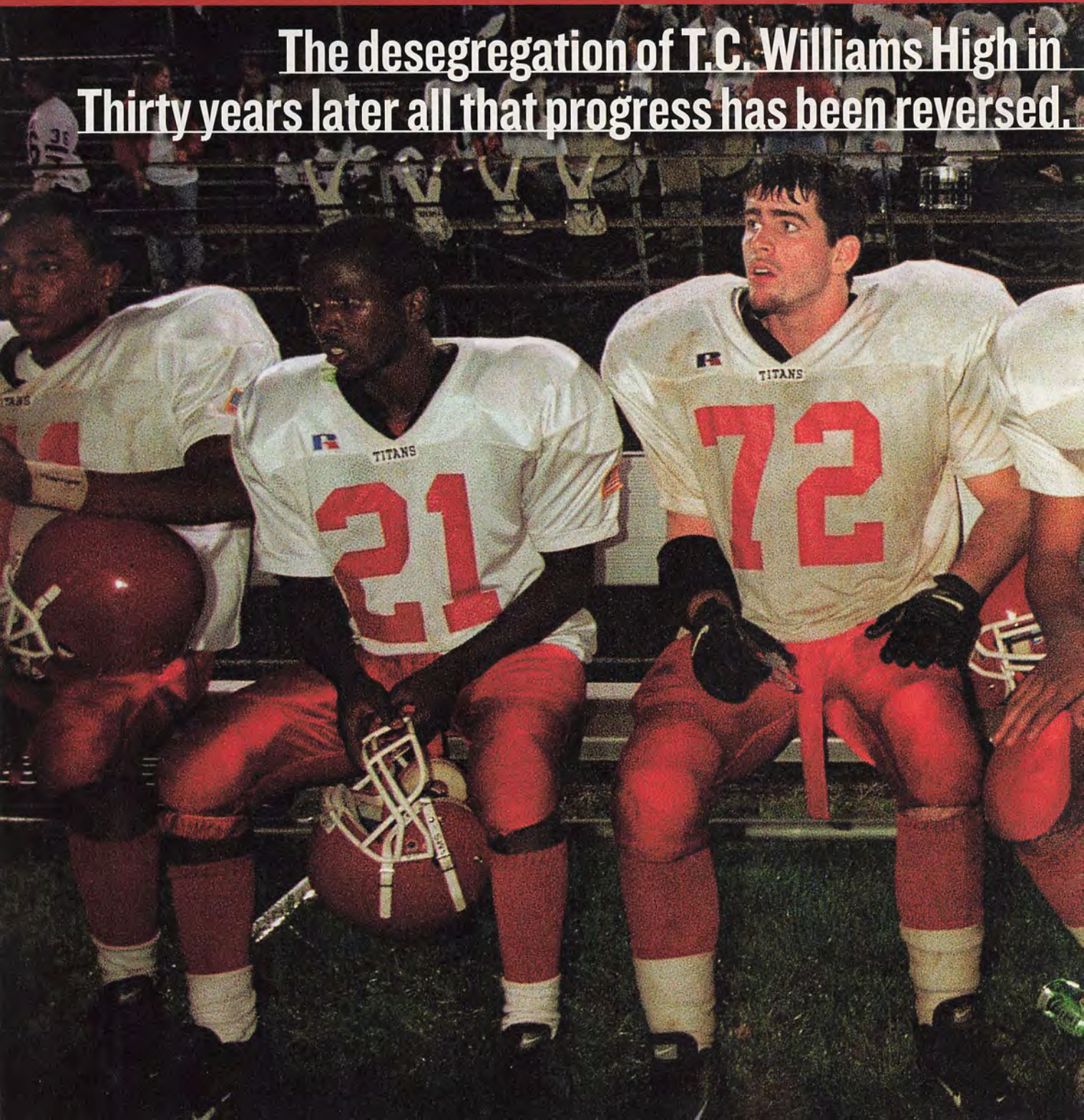
Does Anyone Remember

The desegregation of T.C. Williams High in Thirty years later all that progress has been reversed.

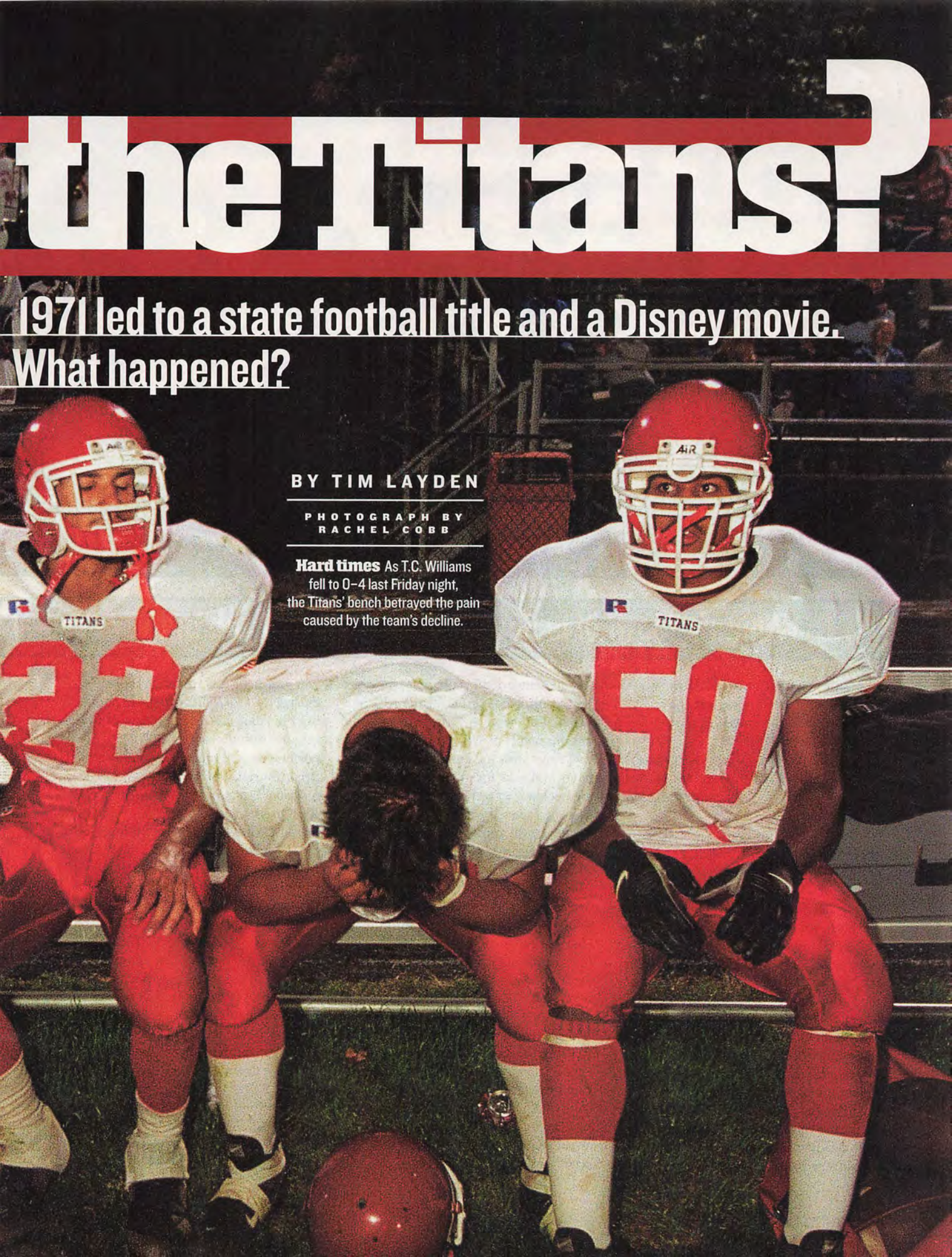


the Titans?

1971 led to a state football title and a Disney movie. What happened?

BY TIM LAYDEN

PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL COBB



Hard times As T.C. Williams fell to 0–4 last Friday night, the Titans' bench betrayed the pain caused by the team's decline.

T.C. Williams football is now almost devoid of the buoyant racial

People say that it can't work, black and white;
Well here we make it work, every day.
We have our disagreements, of course,
But before we reach for hate,
Always, always, we remember the Titans.
—CLOSING LINES FROM THE MOVIE
Remember the Titans

ON THE FIRST Friday in September, the eve of the 2001 football season, the Titans of T.C. Williams High in Alexandria, Va., gather for a pregame meal in the school's ground-floor cafeteria. It is a special evening for the players, symbolic of their persistence and survival. They have been together through a spartan, weeklong August training camp at a rural Virginia military complex. No Game Boys. No television. No boom boxes. No headphones. They have practiced twice a day back home in the stifling late-summer heat. Now the Titans, wearing their blood-red game jerseys, sit in hard-back plastic chairs. At one o'clock the next afternoon they will face Chantilly High, and their effort will be measured in cold numbers. For now everyone is hopeful and all is right. The Titans are undefeated.

At the center of the room first-year coach Riki Ellison, a 41-year-old former NFL linebacker who won a collegiate national championship at USC and three Super Bowl rings with the San Francisco 49ers, stands and asks for quiet. His trademark Panama hat is tipped back on his head, his dress shirt soaked with sweat. "Everybody here at 10:30 tomorrow," Ellison says. "Tonight, enjoy your friends, enjoy your food. Tomorrow we take it to the house."

There are ripples of applause and supportive hoots. "Remember," adds Ellison, raising his right index finger into the air. "One family. One team. One town."

His words are loaded with resonance. A year ago Disney released *Remember the Titans*, a film based on the true story of how the 1971 T.C. Williams team overcame the racial tension created by the combining of largely black and largely white high schools to meet federal desegregation guidelines and won the Virginia state Group AAA championship. The movie missed nary a note in demonstrating that we can all just get along, and it was a huge success, grossing $115 million nationwide.

A year later it is still impossible to walk the halls at T.C. Williams High, a three-story brick building erected in 1965, without feeling the presence of the '71 Titans. Movie posters hang in many classrooms and offices. Tourists visiting Washington, D.C., make the 15-minute trip across the Potomac River to see the school. (They are often surprised to find that it looks nothing like it did in the movie; in fact, the film was made in Georgia.) During the summer a couple from Iowa pulled into the parking lot and asked to take a picture of principal John Porter, even though he had no connection to the '71 team. "It didn't matter," says Porter. "They wanted a photo of a Titan."

One long glass trophy case in the school's carpeted lobby is devoted to the achievements of '71 linebacker Gerry Bertier, who became a world-class Paralympic athlete after a car accident left him paralyzed from the waist down. Another display case honors the '71 Titans and the movie. A visitor

Celluloid heroes The Hollywood version of the integrated '71 title team (above) starred Denzel Washington (right) as the Titans' coach.

counts faces in the team picture. Sure enough, 38 are white and 31 black, almost an even split. They made it work.

So much has changed. T.C. Williams, still one of the largest public high schools in Virginia (2,013 students in three grades), now fields one of the weakest football teams in the state. T.C. Williams was 1–9 in 2000, taunted at every game by opposing crowds alluding to the movie and by opposing players motivated to beat the Titans. A sign displayed during a game at Annandale High read FORGET THE TITANS, REMEMBER THE ATOMS. The Titans have been bad for a long time. T.C. Williams's 10-year record entering the 2001 season was 30–70. Its last winning season was 1995; its last trip to the state playoffs, 1990.

Even more jarring, in light of the feel-good racial harmony at the core of the movie, is the fact that T.C. Williams's football team is almost entirely devoid of the racial balance that made the '71 squad a beacon of social harmony in Alexandria. Of the 42 Titans who dressed for the first game this year, six are white, and of those six only two were starters and only three played before garbage time in the 31–6 opening-game loss to Chantilly—a glaring homogeneity in a city whose population is nearly 60% white.

Those numbers don't tell the whole story, either. For more than a decade, T.C. Williams has held its athletes to higher academic standards for eligibility than most high schools in Virginia, requirements that are criticized emotionally in Alexandria and blamed for reducing the school's talent pool. There is also simmering resentment over the private funding lavished on the school's predominantly white crew program.

For all that has changed at T.C. Williams, many of the racial divisions portrayed at the start of the movie exist today. "The story that nobody in the school system or the community wants to tell is that 30 years have gone by since the events in that movie, and nothing has changed," says Thurston McClain, one of Ellison's first-year assistants and also an Alexandria fireman. "It's still 1971."

IN 1996 SCREENWRITER Gregory Allen Howard was fed up with living in L.A. and moved to Alexandria, where he began casting about for a new project. "I was sort of scrambling for an idea," he recalls. "I couldn't help but notice that Alexandria seemed to be a very integrated city. I asked people how it happened. They kept talking about this football team back in 1971."

Howard researched the '71 Titans and made contact with Herman Boone, the black man who coached T.C. Williams at the time and whose character, portrayed by Denzel Washington, is at the center of the movie. Boone, a proud man, resisted. "This guy called, said he wanted to make a movie, and I didn't believe him," Boone says. Howard wore him down, and Boone eventually helped him work through the pipeline of flummoxed former Titans who were just as shocked that Hollywood would be interested in their story.

The resulting movie is a fairy-tale treatise on race, youth and football. It is full of hoary clichés and cartoonish characters (the bigoted white girlfriend of the star white linebacker, the redneck assistant coach) but succeeds as wholesome entertainment and what Howard calls "a different paradigm on race: You don't have to like each other

balance that made the '71 team a beacon of social harmony.

EVERETT COLLECTION

"I was appalled by the condition of our facilities," says one former

to get along; you just have to respect each other." A quick summary: The two high schools are joined; the no-nonsense black man is named coach instead of the legendary white coach (Bill Yoast, played by Will Patton). Players rebel, then bond and win all their games amid social unrest. A divided city celebrates as one. Fade to black.

Those who lived the '71 season can nitpick the celluloid version of their lives, but they are virtually unanimous in their overall assessment of the film: "The movie captures the *spirit* of the team and the time," says Rufus Littlejohn, a starting linebacker in '71. The movie has brought the players together in a sort of nonstop reunion. They have a website. Groups of them drive together to speak to community groups and the like. The movie is shown and, afterward, questions are answered by the Real Original Titans.

Nobody, however, has been affected as much as Boone. A crusty man given to speech-making to even the smallest audience (one listener will do), he was signed last fall by the American Program Bureau, a Boston-based agency that counts Mikhail Gorbachev and Johnnie Cochran among its more than 200 speakers. Boone makes speeches at colleges, high schools and corporate team-building seminars more than 20 times a month for fees as high as $12,000 per appearance. "We thought demand for Herman would die out when people stopped going to the movie," says Trinity Ray, who represents Boone. "It's been the opposite. He's developed a following almost separate from his character in the film."

Two worlds The privately endowed, mostly white crew team has lavish facilities; the mostly black football team has suffered in squalor.

Yoast accompanies Boone roughly four times a month, and the two men, close friends, work the audience together. "I have to pinch myself," Boone says. "I really do."

Best of all—better than small fame or big money for any of these men—is the knowledge that the message of the movie is real. Coming together in 1971 had been every bit as difficult for them as the film conveys. At the end of the previous school year, administrators had brought together returning football players from all three of the schools that were being merged. (In real life T.C. Williams, George Washington High and Francis C. Hammond High were joined, not two schools.) The players sat on the tiered risers in the T.C. Williams band

room in three distinct groups, segregated mostly by the colors of their skin and of their school shirts. "I was one of the last to walk in, saw where everybody was sitting and thought, Oh, yeah, this is going to work real well," says Jerry Buck, who was a starting offensive lineman on the '71 team.

Players fought even more than those in the movie. "Vicious fights," says Carl Turner, a running back on the '71 team who teaches middle school in Alexandria and coaches jayvee basketball at T.C. Williams. "Black guys fighting white guys, black guys from G.W. fighting black guys from T.C., white guys from Hammond fighting white guys from G.W." In the end, though, says Boone, "the film is about diversity and trust and courage, and that's what we found."

And the part about uniting a city? Many say it's true. "There had been, for several years, a great deal of *adult* tension in the city," says Melvin Miller, a retired Alexandria attorney who was active in the city's roiling civil rights movement in the '60s and '70s and later served as chairman of the city's school board. "That football team helped soothe tempers. It's true. It really brought the city together."

BOONE COACHED T.C. Williams for seven years after '71. His record in Alexandria was a solid 62-19-4, but he never won another state title, and the Titans went 4-5-1 in 1978, his last season. His replacement was Paul (Doc) Hines, one of his assistant coaches, who went 13-14-3 in three years before Glenn Furman, another former Boone assistant, began a 10-year run that included state championships in 1984 and '87. In the middle of the 1991 season Furman's final team was 3–0 and nationally ranked, but it fell apart in a five-game losing streak. That began a slide that has continued until today, leaving little similarity between the movie team and the current squad.

How did the Titans devolve from inspirational diversity and on-field excellence to resegregated ineptitude? They had help.

Like many other U.S. cities, Alexandria has changed demographically. The availability of affordable middle-class housing diminished until the majority of the city's residents were either very poor (and often members of a minority) or very well-to-do (and often older, with grown children, or single and childless). In 1970 Alexandria's population of 110,938 was 85% white, and 77% of the students at T.C. Williams were white. Today the city's population, 128,283, is still 60% white, but the student population at T.C. Williams, the lone public high school in Alexandria, is only 27% white. The mandatory school desegregation portrayed in

city official. "There was a complete breakdown in maintenance."

LYNN JOHNSON (3)

Remember the Titans has been reversed, in part because many middle-class white families have left the city. In 1970 more than 21,000 white couples owned homes in Alexandria; now around 14,500 do.

By contrast, the number of low-income or publicly subsidized housing units in the city, many of them populated by minority families, has increased to 4,925 from 1,125 in the days of the original Titans. "If you don't have a plan in place to keep integration functioning, you'll get resegregation," says Gary Orfield, a professor of education and social policy at Harvard and co-director of Harvard's Civil Rights Project.

As the city's demographics changed, so did support for school programs. Football, the sport with the need for the most funding, suffered worst. "The school has let football slide, and the community hasn't supported football," says Patrick Welsh, who has taught English at T.C. Williams for 30 years. "The sport has been left to die."

Another kind of trouble contributed to the decline. In the winter of 1987, following Furman's second state title, all-state linebacker Tracy Fells was arrested and charged with possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute. He was acquitted of that charge, but he was later convicted of the same offense, and in 1989 he was sentenced to a 20-year term (with a minimum of 17 years in prison). Later, another Titans

player was arrested for cocaine and handgun possession. Players from both the '84 and '87 teams told SI that drug use and drug dealing were rampant among the Titans throughout the middle of the decade. "I can think of at least seven guys who were dealing drugs on the '84 team," says a starter on that year's squad, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

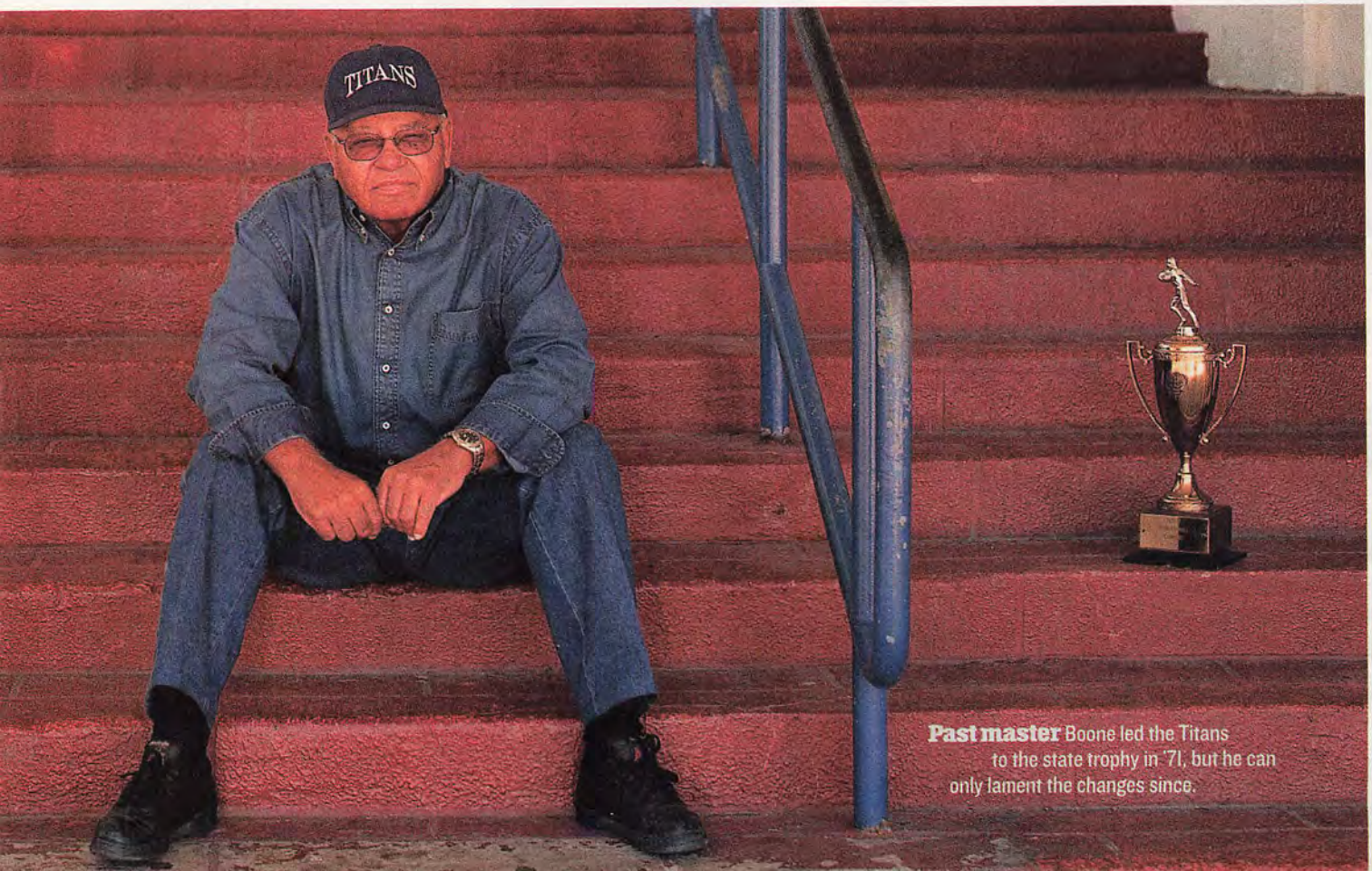
Bill Dawes, who played on the '87 and '88 teams and is an actor living in New York City, says, "On both of my teams there was drug trafficking and drug use. You would hear conversations in the locker room. Nobody was hiding anything. I used to give some of my teammates rides home to the projects, and they talked openly about the drug trafficking on the team, and it was by no means limited to Tracy Fells."

Almost in concert with the rise and fall of Furman's teams in the '80s, the Alexandria school board stiffened the academic standards for T.C. Williams students participating in interscholastic sports. Alexandria had always used the state requirement that an athlete simply pass four courses, but in the early '80s it raised the minimum grade point average to 1.55 for the marking period prior to the relevant sports season (the previous spring for football players). Before the 1991 football season the minimum GPA was raised again, to 2.0 (a C average). The issue was—and remains—controversial, because under Virginia High School League rules athletes can play with a 1.0 average. Alexandria is one of the few school districts in the state to have raised requirements on its own. Many people in the city believed that the toughened standards were aimed at the football program and its troubles. "There was a feeling of, Let's not let the football team embarrass us anymore," says Welsh. "The school board and the administration seemed to feel that a harsh C rule would clean up the team."

Furman argued against the rule. Boone, who was retired from coaching but still teaching driver's education in the district, argued against it. Yoast, who was still working with the football team, argued against it. "Nobody seemed to realize that the kids who were going to be excluded by the rule were the ones who were most in need of supervision between three and six o'clock," says Yoast.

Paul Masem, the Alexandria superintendent from 1987 to '94, brought the 2.0 rule to Alexandria after having implemented it in the Little Rock school system, and he scoffs at the coaches' claims. "The only people who complained were coaches afraid of losing players," says Masem, who is white and who is now retired after having worked as a superintendent in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. "T.C. Williams is a big school with broad-based programs. Stu-

"The film is about diversity and trust and courage," says Boone, the '71 coach, "and that's what we found."



LYNN JOHNSON

Past master Boone led the Titans to the state trophy in '71, but he can only lament the changes since.

New blood Ellison (in trademark hat) has tried to light a fire under his players and, more important, under the administration.

LYNN JOHNSON

dents doing remedial work could qualify for sports. It isn't that difficult."

Miller, the retired Alexandria attorney, who is black and who was a member of the school board when it passed the 2.0 rule, agrees with Masem. "Left alone, the system wouldn't have helped kids below 2.0 get into college," says Miller. Yet the C rule remains a lightning rod at T.C. Williams; it's one of the first factors mentioned in any discussion of the football program's struggles.

As significant to the football program was the deterioration of facilities. When Ellison took over last spring, he found his only practice field was a mess of weeds and dirt. The blocking sleds were decades old, rusted and nearly useless. Locker room showers and toilets were filthy and so clogged that they couldn't be used. "I was appalled by the condition of our facilities, especially the locker room," says a former Alexandria administrator who has left the district. "There had to have been a complete breakdown in reporting and maintenance, from the facilities manager to the athletic director to the principal of the school."

Because football requires more equipment and more funding than most sports, it was hardest hit by such neglect. The weight room, according to Ellison, was a wreck. Often T. C. Williams's junior varsity and freshman football teams are pushed off practice fields by youth soccer teams. Funding for football is approximately $12,500 a year, from an athletic budget of $65,000, says athletic director Aly Khan Johnson, who in the mid-'80s was the school's cross-country and track coach. "That figure has been steady for many years," he says.

Eric Henderson, who was the football coach for two years before Ellison took over (record: 4–16, including one forfeit for an eligibility violation in 2000), says he spent $5,000 of his own money to improve the program. "I asked for help from the school, but I couldn't get any," says Henderson. "At one point I was told to cut kids because the school didn't have enough equipment for them." (Johnson denies that Henderson was asked to cut players.)

White participation, meanwhile, had waned. Neither of Furman's state title teams had more than five white players who made significant contributions. The '84 squad had a certain amount of black-white unity, of the sort depicted in the hilarious scene in *Remember the Titans* in which black players initiate Gerry Bertier into the world of Yo Mama put-downs, in effect making him one of their own. Mike Porterfield, a white starting offensive lineman on the '84 team who would go on to row crew for the U.S. national team and coach the women's pair (without coxswain) to a bronze medal at the 2000 Olympics, says, "The experience I had at T.C., playing football with black guys, mixing with them every day, is something I've never replicated. I loved it and I miss it. The Yo Mama scene in the movie cut right to my heart, because that was my experience."

Three years later, however, Dawes, a starting wide receiver in '88, had a different impression of the team. "By the time I came through, it was clear that the team belonged to the black guys," he says.

Today it is rare to find a white player contributing to the football program. "Most white kids around here wouldn't even think of coming out for football," says Josh Freeman, a white senior who has been in the football program for four years and was T.C. Williams's starting center before a knee injury ended his season in early September. "They think it's a black sport."

"That's a problem," says Yoast. "Not because you need white kids to be a good football team—you don't—but because in Group AAA in Virginia you need *all* your good athletes on the field. Some of them are going to be white."

Says Marvin Watkins, a senior wide receiver on this year's team, "Most of the good teams we play have big white guys and quick black athletes. We don't."

Visitors to T.C. Williams are greeted by the lobby's Hall of Nations, a display of flags representing the more than 80 birth countries of the school's vastly diverse population. Diversity, however, does not breed interaction. "Alexandria has a huge international community," says former superintendent Masem, "but the community is socially split, and the school is socially split."

Down and out Game days have become a series of ordeals for the bedraggled Titans, who have been outscored 126–26 this fall.

ers, the team buys one eight-oared shell a year. The boosters sponsor six fund-raising activities each year and operate an endowment worth almost $40,000. "An awful lot of good people have given time to this program," says Penn.

On the second floor of the boathouse is a sprawling weight room that, by comparison, humbles the football team's musty basement facility. Dozens of T.C. rowers have gone on to row in college. There is little crossover between crew and football, despite the former's preponderance of tall, strong athletes and the latter's need for the same. Says Clayton Wynne, a 5' 10", 175-pound senior rower, "The football team isn't very good, and that's part of the reason the white kids don't want to do it."

Black kids don't row, either. Penn says that of the 87 boys and 93 girls in the program, 12 are black. "I've been hassled about

"Most white kids wouldn't think of coming out for football," says one player. "They think it's a black sport."

Inside T.C. Williams that dynamic produces something dangerously close to separate-but-equal facilities. "There are no racial clashes at T.C.," says Jay Blount, a Yale freshman who was president of the school's student government last year. "There is no anger, and nobody cares what your race or national origin is. But people stick with their own social class. I saw lots of black kids every day, but I hung out with my white friends, took my AP [advanced placement] classes and rowed crew."

Alexandria city manager Phil Sunderland, who sent three children through T.C. Williams, says, "T.C. tends to differentiate by class and race and social network. We have to do a better job of removing that."

T.C. Williams has lost many white athletes to private schools. Billy Schweitzer, a redshirt freshman quarterback on scholarship at Virginia, was raised in Alexandria but attended St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School there. "I grew up playing rec sports with T.C. Williams kids," says Schweitzer, "but when it comes to high school, you don't benefit athletically or academically from going there. If your parents have the means to send you to private school, you go."

Nothing, though, illustrates the struggle of the Titans football program more than its comparison with crew. Thanks to aggressive fund-raising outside the school budget by well-heeled Alexandria parents, T.C. Williams's crew operation, with its $1.3 million boathouse on the banks of the Potomac, would be the envy of many colleges. "The crew program is outstanding," says Blount. "The facilities are incredible. On a scale of one to 10, crew is a 10, and the football program is about a two."

On a warm September afternoon the T.C. Williams boys' crew coach, Mike Penn, stands on the floor of the cavernous Alexandria Schools Rowing Facility, which was built by the city for the school district in 1983. There are 25 four- and eight-oared shells in large racks, along with several double shells. A fully equipped eight-oared shell costs about $27,000, and with the help of the parent-driven Alexandria Crew Boost-

the lack of participation by minority kids," says Penn. "I've tried for years to get black kids to come out for crew. It's difficult breaking down stereotypes. Plus, I've had several African-American kids come to me who couldn't pass the swimming test." (The test, says Penn, requires a 100-meter swim and an unaided two-minute float.) When Penn attended a preseason football meeting, black football assistants McClain and John Morehead say they got into a heated debate with him over the lack of cross-pollination between the sports.

"To make a generalization, the crew parents represent where the money and power are," says Porterfield. "The parents in the football program are not in the same position." Therefore, the football program has had only the resources that the school provided, and those were not enough.

AFTER HIS team's opening loss to Chantilly, a defeat that would be followed by three more losses by a combined score of 95–20, Riki Ellison walked out the front

LYNN JOHNSON

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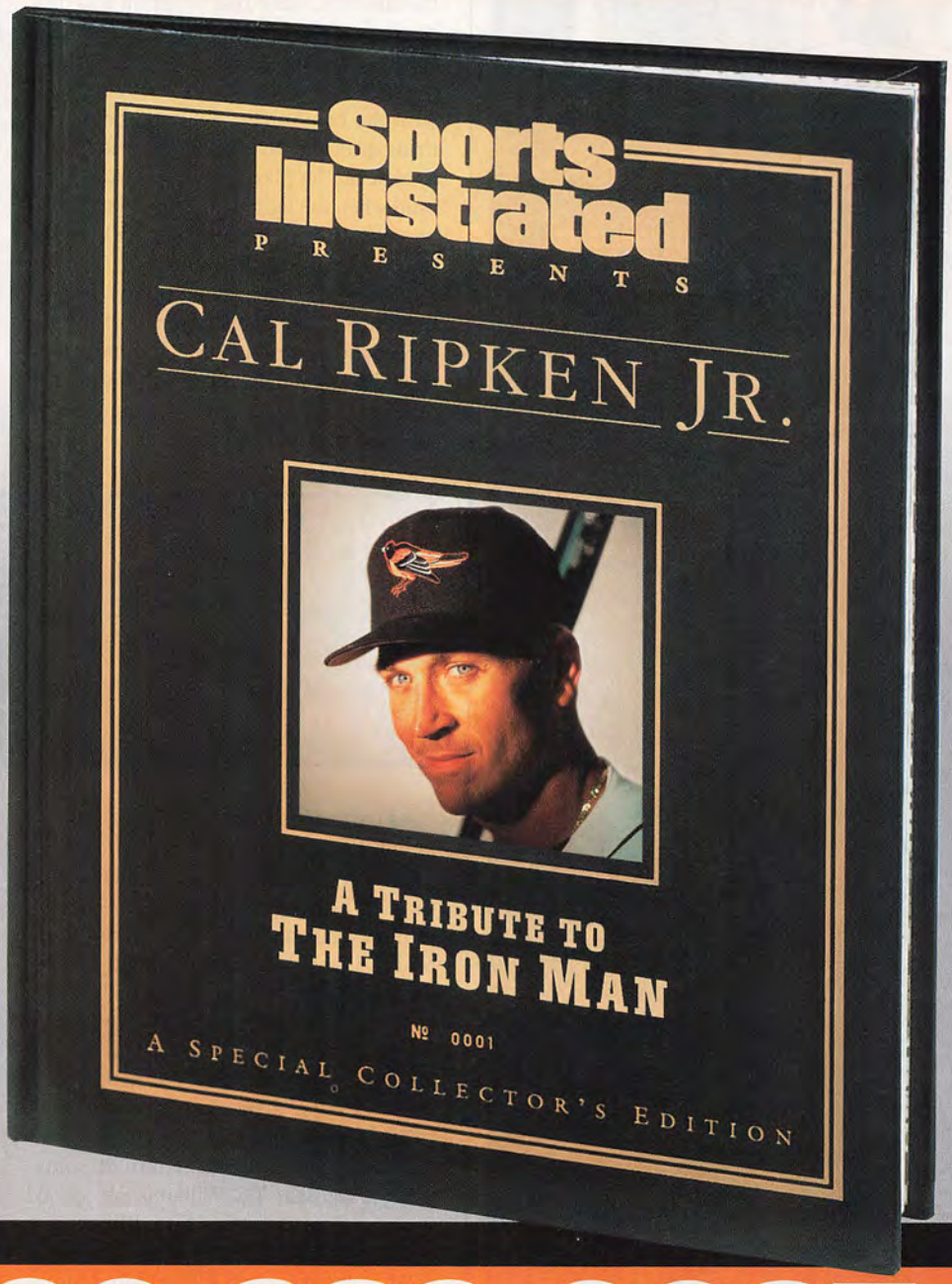

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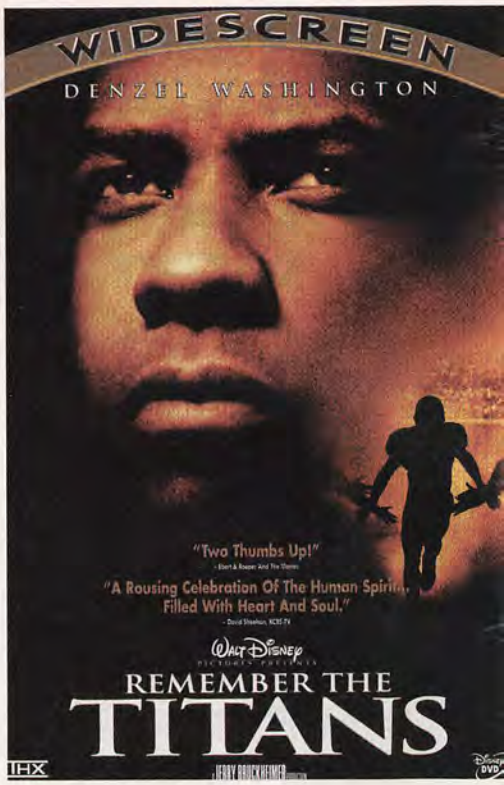
T.C. Williams High

door of T.C. Williams High, shuffling under the weight of a heavy briefcase, an ink-jet printer (for copying game plans and play selection cards) and 30 years of history. "We're going to get this done," he said. "I'm not quitting until we do."

Ellison brings an eclectic résumé to his job. Born in New Zealand, he went to high school in Arizona before playing at USC in the late '70s, when that program was producing some of the most talented college teams in history. He also played 10 years in the NFL (seven with the 49ers, three with the Los Angeles Raiders) before retiring after the '92 season. An undersized linebacker, he played on brains and guts, "and when the fight was gone, it was gone," he says. After retirement Ellison lived for four years in New Zealand with his wife and four children, playing rugby and getting the NFL out of his system. In 1996, divorced, he returned to the U.S. and took a consulting job with Lockheed Martin, the defense and aerospace company, and moved to northern Virginia.



"It's sad to see what's happened," says Boone. "Football can bring your school together. It really can."

As part of his work with the company's philanthropic efforts, Ellison visited twice a week with students at T.C. Williams, and in 2000 he sought a position as an assistant football coach. He was not hired. He took a job helping coach at St. Albans School, an exclusive prep school in D.C. It got him back in the game but was unfulfilling. "I think the kids at St. Albans got something from me, but it was nothing that could change their lives," says Ellison. "They were incredibly bright, but privileged and coddled. I wanted to do something more." The T.C. Williams job opened up last winter, and this time Ellison was hired. He hasn't stopped running since.

As part of his staff, Ellison hired Morehead, McClain, Tony Lee and Steve Miner, black men with high school coaching experience and with standing in the community. Meanwhile, Ellison courted influential members of the community to exert pressure on the school administration. A committee formed by departing Alexandria superintendent Herb Berg recommended that $240,000 of the T.C. Williams budget be allocated for athletics. A payment of $100,000 was eventually approved, of which $81,952 was immediately spent on football. "If I had known we needed funds for athletics two or three years ago, I would have found the money then," says Berg. "T.C. Williams should showcase football."

With those funds the weight room was refurbished, blocking sleds were replaced, the practice field was resodded and, for $15,000, the Titans spent a week bonding at Fort Pickett in central Virginia. The same committee recommended a change in the 2.0 GPA standard, so that it goes into effect in an athlete's sophomore year—in effect, giving freshmen a year to satisfy the requirements. Grades remain an issue:

WALT DISNEY PICTURES

Ellison enticed 200 students to sign a preliminary tryout sheet last spring, and 87 of them were ineligible. Of his 36 top players 18 are at risk of falling below 2.0.

Community supporters have formed a football booster club, seeking donations on the crew model. But with financial assistance from a private foundation, Ellison has been able to start the Odyssey Program, which will provide after-hours study halls and SAT prep work, among other academic support, to football players. He also is using other incentives to try to motivate his team. Players who achieve a significant jump in their GPA will receive a pair of basketball shoes. Those who reach the highest academic goals set for them can earn a letterman's jacket. "Work for this," Ellison tells his players. "I'm hearing rumors that some of you don't bring books home. Start."

Still, the team is too small, too weak and too inexperienced to win in a strong suburban league, although last Friday night's tough 13–6 loss to West Springfield High sounded the first encouraging note of the season. "Not one player will play at any level of college ball," says Donald Futrell, a former assistant to Boone and Furman. (Ellison disagrees, and thinks that 6' 2", 190-pound junior tailback Tony Hunt will play Division I-A ball.) The school administration has asked Ellison to improve the diversity of the program. Maybe it wants support from affluent parents. Maybe it would like the team picture to look more like that of the '71 Titans. "There's so much to do," says Ellison. "Change the environment, make kids proud to play football and, most important, make football a vehicle to take them somewhere in life."

In the week before the football season began, Herman Boone sat on the bleachers next to the T.C. Williams football field, recalling another time. He lives with his wife of 39 years, Carol, in a house not far from the school. It's the same house in which the windows were broken by a toilet full of feces heaved into his living room by his racist critics in that fall of 1971, the same house in which Boone now writes speeches about bringing us all together. "It makes me sad to see what's happened at T.C., with so much trouble winning and so few white boys on the team," he says. He pauses to look across the light-green late-summer grass and continues, "Football can bring your school together, it really can."

His words are a sweet, distant memory, re-formed as a wish. □

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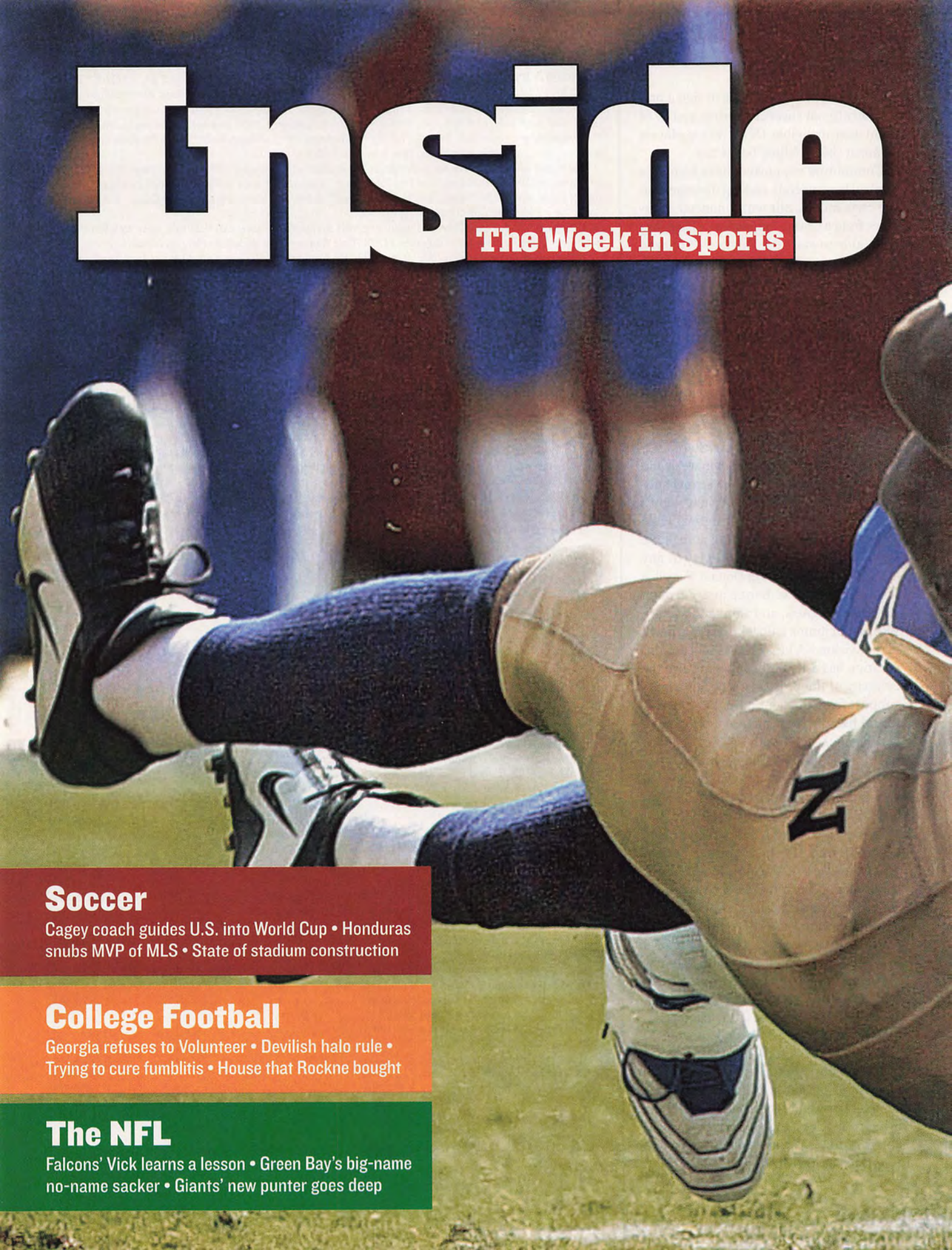

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Navy wideout Jeff Gaddy is waylaid by free safety Jeff Overstreet of Air Force during the Falcons' 24–18 victory.

Photograph by Steven Senne/AP

Mastermind

In qualifying for the World Cup, U.S. coach Bruce Arena pushed all the right buttons

by Grant Wahl

SO REMOTE were the U.S.'s chances of clinching a fourth straight World Cup berth that when it actually happened on Sunday, team officials had to hunt down four bottles of champagne in a catering supply room at Foxboro Stadium to celebrate. "We couldn't believe it," said defender Jeff Agoos after the Yanks' 2–1 victory over Jamaica, combined with a tie by Mexico and an upset loss by Honduras, earned the U.S. a spot in Japan and South Korea next June. "Nobody in our locker room thought we were going to qualify today."

Staggered by three consecutive losses, coach Bruce Arena challenged his players before the match by reading an inscription from the plaque he had received as a 50th birthday present from a friend: "What would you attempt to do if you could not fail?" Duly emboldened, the Americans played without fear, riding the unique playmaking skills of captain Claudio Reyna, who returned after missing three games because of injury and suspension. "He's phenomenal," says striker Landon Donovan. "It takes pressure off people when he holds the ball. He does a lot of the work [so] that we don't have to."

Adds Arena, "When you add Claudio to the mix, you can get players forward and create chances. We sorely missed that."

In qualifying, Arena displayed an uncanny talent for player management, massaging bruised egos with a masterly touch. Within an hour of the U.S.'s 2–0 loss at Costa Rica last month, Arena held a heart-to-heart in the bar of the team hotel with forward Joe-Max Moore, who had been unhappy coming off the bench in the last two matches. "I told him that he had been productive in those games," Arena recalls, "and that he should be ready to start in Foxboro." Sure enough, Moore was in the lineup on Sunday and scored both goals—on a diving header early in the first half to put the U.S. ahead, and on a penalty kick in the 81st minute to break the tie.

In June, Arena defused the biggest personnel crisis of his three-year tenure with a dose of welcome patience. According to two players, at the end of the bus ride to the hotel following the Americans' 2–0 win over Trinidad and Tobago, goalkeeper Brad Friedel, disgruntled at backing up Kasey Keller, announced to his teammates that he would no longer play for the U.S. After meeting with Arena, however, Friedel left for Bora-Bora on his honeymoon and soon decided to rejoin the team. Because Keller is riding the bench for the English club Tottenham Hotspur while Friedel starts for Blackburn Rovers, Arena has used Friedel in the last two games, and he's played solidly.

The challenge now is for the U.S. team to rebuild in the coming months as a host of attackers—Clint Mathis, Brian McBride, Ben Olsen and Josh Wolff—return from long-term injuries to the active roster. "We told the players that if we could get through this stretch when we're not at our best, we'll bring some players back and get better over the next six months," Arena says.

There's certainly room to improve on the U.S.'s last-place finish at the World Cup in France. "Our goal is to play better and to get better results than we did in '98," Arena says. "But you never know what the draw will bring. We could open with France, and Brazil could be a Number 2 seed in the same group."

On a memorable afternoon in New England, Arena could afford to leave those worries for another day—and maybe even enjoy a swig or two of victory champagne.

Miami's Scoring Sensation

MVP in MLS, but Left Out at Home

It's a bittersweet time for first-year Fusion midfielder Alex Pineda Chacón. Sure, Chacón has been the revelation of MLS this season, earning SI's MVP vote by scoring a league-leading 19

Moore made the most of his return as a starter, scoring both U.S. goals in the 2–1 win over Jamaica.

goals. So why on Sunday did Chacón, one of Honduras's best players, have to watch on television from Miami while his country played its most important World Cup qualifier in 20 years?

"Good question," Chacón said last week, laughing ruefully, before Honduras suffered a shocking 1–0 home loss to Trinidad and Tobago, jeopardizing its chances of reaching the World Cup for the first time since 1982. (Honduras must win at Mexico on Nov. 11 to qualify.) Chacón, 31, hasn't played for Honduras since last year because of a simmering feud with coach Ramón Maradiaga. For months Maradiaga refused to include Chacón on the roster, never giving a reason, and on June 30 the two men stood 10 feet apart at an MLS-Honduran doubleheader in the Orange Bowl without saying a word to each other. A week later Maradiaga tried to call up Chacón when Honduras needed players for the Copa América, but Chacón refused, citing his commitment to Miami.

"It's difficult," says Chacón. "I am a patriot, and it has always been a dream of mine to play in the World Cup. I will always support Honduras, whether Maradiaga is the coach or not, but I can't play for him right now."

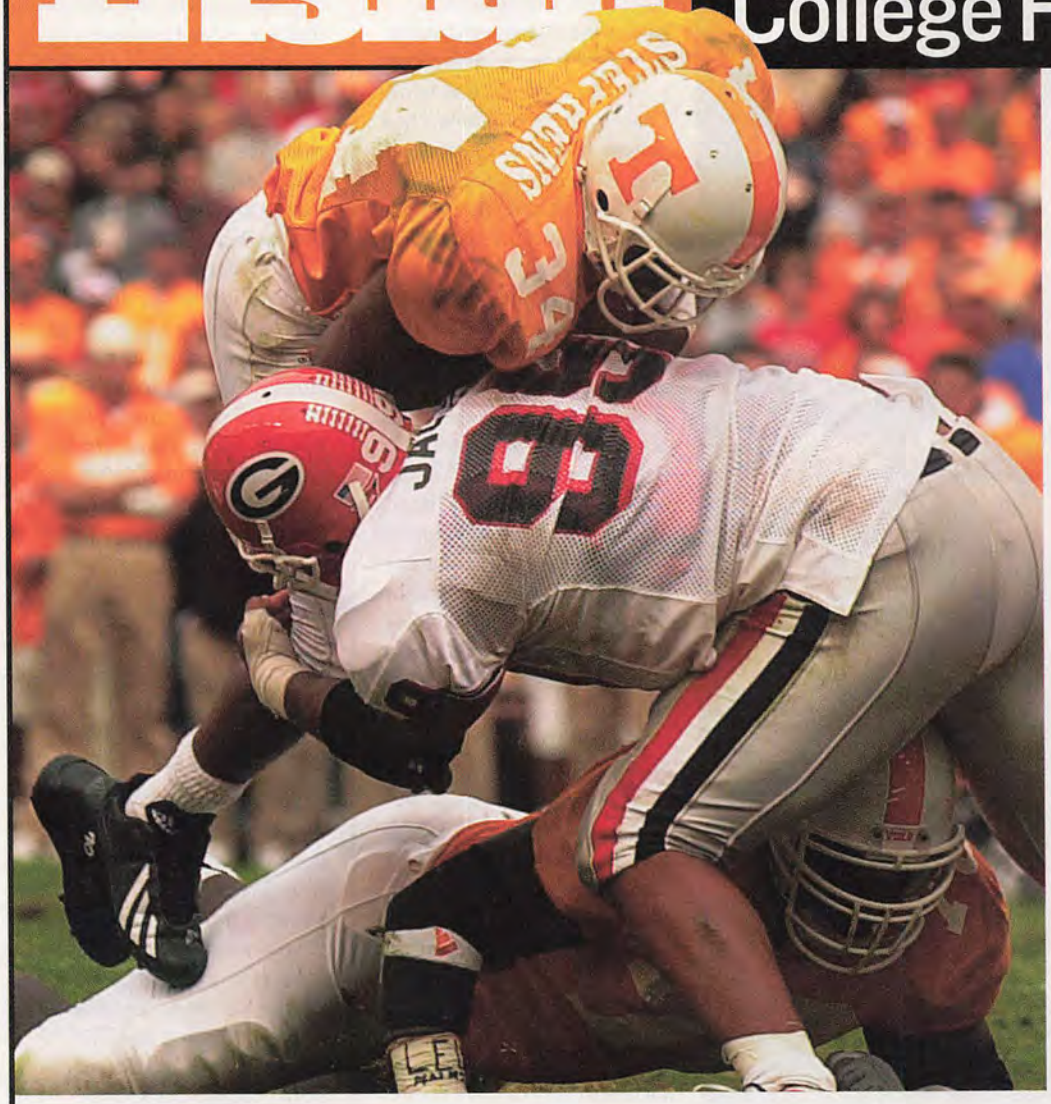
Fortunately for Chacón there's no confusion when he's *con Fusión*. While MLS has several strong MVP candidates, from Fire midfielder Peter Nowak to Miami forward Diego Serna and midfielder Preki, Chacón has earned SI's nod with his remarkable consistency. "Goal-scoring is the be-all and end-all," says Fusion coach Ray Hudson. "We play beautiful possession soccer, but if it weren't for Alex's being so clinical up front, it would be like sex without the orgasm, you know?"

Chacón won more titles (16) in 12 years with his club, Olimpia, than any other Honduran player. But when his agent worked out a deal with MLS last spring, Chacón eagerly accepted the new challenge. The Honduran magazine *As Deportiva* recently named him the best Honduran playing abroad. If the Fusion can get by the Earthquakes in its playoff semifinal series this week, Chacón will have a chance to add another championship to his résumé on Oct. 21 in MLS Cup 2001. "I'm trying to enjoy things with the Fusion because you only have one career, one life," Chacón says. "There are good times and bad times, and these are very good times." □

throw-Ins

WHILE PLANS for soccer-only facilities for the Fire and the MetroStars are stuck in the talking stages, crews are scheduled to break ground in mid-November on a 20,000-seat soccer stadium for the Galaxy, part of a $112 million complex in Carson, Calif., set to open in 2003. . . . Goalkeeper **Briana Scurry** regained her splendid form of 1999 for the WUSA's Atlanta Beat last season, yet U.S. women's coach **April Heinrichs** didn't include her among the three keepers she brought in for last month's U.S. Cup—after Scurry declined to play in two friendlies against Canada in July. . . . U.S. teams will switch to blue jerseys next spring after having worn red since 1998, according to sources at Nike and the U.S. Soccer Federation. Will Yanks fans switch as well? "We're gonna keep plugging away with the red," says **Mark Spacone**, cofounder of the fan club **Sam's Army**, which forms a sea of red at U.S. games. "White and blue tend to get lost in the stadium."

SIMON BRUTY



David Jacobs stopped Travis Stephens for one of his 7½ tackles in the Bulldogs' 26–24 victory.

BRANT SANDERLIN/ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION

Seminoled

Georgia coach Mark Richt pulled a play out of a familiar book to upset Tennessee

by Ivan Maisel

THE FLORIDA STATE offense is alive and well—and wearing the red and black of Georgia. The Bulldogs, after giving up a go-ahead touchdown to No. 6 Tennessee with 44 seconds to play last Saturday, drove 59 yards in five plays for a touchdown with five seconds to spare and won 26–24.

The winning drive looked familiar to anyone who had seen first-year Georgia coach and former Seminoles offensive coordinator Mark Richt call Florida State's plays for the last seven years. On first-and-10 from the Bulldogs 41, lefthanded freshman quarterback David Greene completed a 13-yard pass to Damien Gary, which took the ball to the Volunteers' 46. Gary, a sophomore, had started Georgia's first three games at flanker but opened at tailback against Tennessee because, Richt said, "I want a back who can make the first guy miss, who can do things that [former Seminoles star] Warrick Dunn did."

After an incompletion Greene threw passes of 26 and 14 yards to junior tight end Randy McMichael. On first-and-goal at the six with 10 seconds to play, the Bulldogs used their last timeout. When Greene came to the sideline, Richt had to yell instructions into the earhole of Greene's helmet to be heard above the roar of the Tennessee fans. Richt called for a play-action pass to senior fullback Verron Haynes. The Bulldogs hadn't run this play in a game this year. Richt, though, had employed it twice in critical moments during the Seminoles' 1999 national championship season. (Chris Weinke had used it to throw a second-quarter touchdown to fullback Dan Kendra in Florida State's 41–35 defeat of Georgia Tech and a two-point conversion to Kendra late in the third quarter of a 17–14 victory at Clemson.) "If it's against the right coverage, it's almost impossible to stop," Richt says. "It's hard for a middle linebacker to see a fullback coming at him like it's an isolation play and not step up. That's what linebackers do."

Tennessee defensive coordinator John Chavis didn't think it should have been so hard to resist falling for the play-action. "Ninety-nine-point-five percent of the time, they're not going to run the ball in that situation," Chavis said. With the Volunteers' safeties in double coverage on the Georgia receivers, Haynes

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blew past the linebackers and had no one within five yards of him. Greene flipped him the ball, and the Bulldogs won in Knoxville for the first time since 1980.

"I told Greeny, if it was any other coverage, throw it out of the end zone," Richt said. "I was trying to think of what to do next while the play was going on. Then I quit and just watched."

Debate over Halo Rule

Punt Returners At Risk?

The debate over the so-called halo rule, which requires defenders to remain at least two yards from a punt returner until he has caught the ball, has gained intensity in the wake of a 1997 rules revision that states, "A player who violates this two-yard restriction may tackle the runner but may not rough him [that is, make contact with him before he touches the ball or while he's first touching it]. Roughing the runner or receiver is enforced as a [15-yard] contact foul." In other words, a player who tackles a returner inside the halo could receive the same five-yard penalty as a coverage man who violates the two-yard halo but does not tackle the returner. Some coaches believe that a five-yard penalty is an acceptable price to pay to ensure that a team doesn't break off a long return. Moreover, a five-yard penalty may not be enough of a deterrent to keep a lead coverage man, or gunner, from trying to knock a punt returner out of the game. SI recently asked Clemson punt returner Brian Mance and his roommate, gunner Toure Francis, to discuss the rule and the nuances of the punt return.

MANCE: During our game with Georgia Tech on September 29, people in the stands were yelling, "Just go ahead and hit him! The penalty is only five yards!" That's the mentality people have. It would hurt the coverage team a whole lot more if the player who violated the halo rule was ejected or had to sit out.

FRANCIS: So much emphasis is placed on the big hit, the big tackle, to switch momentum. That's what the gunner is looking at: Maybe I can change the game. Maybe I can get on *SportsCenter*. Maybe I can get this big hit. So a stiffer penalty might be a good idea, because we gunners are thinking of hitting the returner dead in the mouth. It's like a slam dunk. Everybody wants to get that slam dunk and get on television, just like everybody wants to get that big hit.

SI: How difficult is it for the gunner to honor that halo when he isn't sure where the ball is and he's fighting to elude a blocker?

FRANCIS: It's quite difficult. You are trying to get that guy off you, and you are trying to make sure you are in the right position. So to be honest, the halo isn't even a concern. You are supposed to break down in front of the returner and not lose containment. That's what I'm worried about.

MANCE: As a returner, you get used to having the gunner coming at you. Every time you look

PETER READ MILLER

short Yardage

>YA GOTTA LOVE THIS GUY

UNLV freshman tailback Dominique Dorsey is listed in the Rebels' media guide as being 5′ 8″, 165 pounds, but even that's generous. He's closer to 5′ 7″, 153. Dorsey's first collegiate kickoff return went for 87 yards against Northwestern, and he continues to lead the nation with an average of 46.7 yards per return. Last season, despite becoming the California high school career rushing leader (7,761 yards, 118 touchdowns at Tulare Union High), Dorsey listened to one recruiter after another tell him he should be a cornerback. Only four schools offered him the chance to remain at tailback: Arizona State, Fresno State, Pittsburgh and UNLV. Dorsey picked Rebels coach John Robinson and his running backs assistant, John Jackson, because they'd had Heisman Trophy winners Charles White and Marcus Allen at USC. Robinson uses Dorsey as a change of pace to 5′ 11″, 190-pound junior Joe Haro. Dorsey has come off the bench to rush for 301 yards and three touchdowns, including 180 yards in last Saturday's 27–12 victory over Nevada, the Rebels' first win in five games. Robinson praises Dorsey's ability to make tacklers miss. As Rebels opponents are quickly learning, you can't hit what you can't see.

>DRAFT BAROMETER

An NFL scout assesses 6′ 4″, 220-pound Oregon senior quarterback Joey Harrington (left), who threw three touchdown passes and ran for three others in a 63–28 victory over Arizona last Saturday:

"He's almost Manning-like in his field presence. Excellent decision-maker. Good touch. When he throws, he rarely puts his team in danger because he gets the ball where only his guy can catch it, not the defensive back. I don't see him as a top 10 pick because I don't think he has the hose to make all the downfield throws, but I like the maturity he's shown with all the hype around him this year. He's definitely a first-round player. You can win with him."

>HEAD TO HEAD

Boston College tailback William Green vs. Virginia Tech rover Kevin McCadam

The 6′ 1″, 217-pound Green, who rushed for 105.8 yards a game last season while sharing the tailback job, has blossomed into a more productive rusher as a junior. He's averaging 142.6 yards per game, fifth in the nation, and has scored seven touchdowns, while carrying the ball 28 times per game. The Eagles gained 213 yards rushing in a 48–34 loss to Virginia Tech last year , but this fall the Hokies lead the nation against the run, allowing 39.4 yards per game. Virginia Tech cornerbacks Ronyell Whitaker and Larry Austin are so good that McCadam, a 6′ 1″, 215-pound senior, spends most of his time as the eighth man in the box. A stalwart run-stopper, he's third on the team in tackles with 28.

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up, in the back of your mind you think, This guy could lay me out. Usually it doesn't happen, so you gain confidence. But once you get hit, it's time to get the backup off the sideline because you are going to be gun-shy.

FRANCIS: As a gunner, I don't like it that they can throw a hand up quickly for a fair catch, and all of a sudden we have to stop, even if it's not clear whether the returner is waving his hand to signal for the catch. Returners should have to define themselves more clearly. It's a skill they have mastered to fake us out.

MANCE: As a punt returner, it's like living on the edge. You've got to have that mentality. You can't look down, glance at a gunner. You have to keep looking at the ball, because you will misjudge it if you don't. You have to trust your guys blocking for you. If you have good blockers, guys who are dedicated to you, everything will go fine. If you don't feel comfortable catching it, back away.

FRANCIS: We're roommates, so we're good friends. When I'm playing with him on the punt return unit, he's like, "Hey, give me a good block. I'm your friend. Don't let them kill me."

MANCE: Against Georgia Tech last year the coverage guys were getting close, so I held my hand up like this [straight in the air]. I didn't signal [waving hand]. They tell you that if you want a fair catch, the signal has to be clear. So I held my hand up, and the coverage guys stopped. I caught the ball. Then I took off.

FRANCIS: See what I'm saying?

MANCE: There are little things you can do to your advantage.

Getting a Grip

Radical Cures For Fumblitis

Phil Petty didn't need to be told. After coughing up the ball during the second week of two-a-days, South Carolina's starting quarterback knew his punishment. He jogged solemnly toward Fumble Island, a small sandlot adjacent to the Gamecocks' practice field replete with tiki torches, pink flamingo figurines and ankle-deep sand. There, Petty scooped up a football and began the first of five round-trip sprints through a hanging eight-tire course designed to cut down on his errant ways.

As South Carolina players have learned the hard way, a trip to this island is no tropical vacation.

BOB ROSATO

"We wanted to create a place where players would never want to visit," says offensive coordinator Skip Holtz, who helped map out Fumble Island after the Gamecocks lost 12 fumbles while going 8–4 last year. Discovering the uncharted island has barely helped: This year South Carolina has lost the ball four times in five games, all victories.

The ninth-ranked Gamecocks aren't the only team to have gone to extraordinary lengths in an attempt—often vain—to cure fumblitis. After learning that Southern Cal led the Pac-10 with 18 fumbles last season, new coach Pete Carroll instituted a preseason, off-field procedure: Every freshman player carried a locked backpack containing a football wherever he went. The upperclassmen were instructed to try to wrestle away the packs whenever they got a chance. "The idea is that taking care of the ball should be as natural as waking up in the morning," says running backs coach Wayne Moses. The Trojans have lost only three fumbles, tied for third best in the Pac-10, during a 1–4 start.

Their crosstown rivals might want to take note. Although undefeated and ranked seventh, UCLA is among the nation's leaders in lost fumbles this season with eight. In daily ball-security drills, Bruins coaches put a nylon sleeve on a ball to make it slippery. (Other teams, like Florida, have used wet balls for the same effect.) UCLA also has a device called a gauntlet sled with a series of mechanical arms through which ballcarriers must pass while holding onto the ball for dear life. After losing four of seven fumbles in a Sept. 22 game against Ohio State (starting tailback DeShaun Foster lost two of his four fumbles), "we lived in the gauntlet," says Bruins offensive coordinator Kelly Skipper.

The thing is, "that gauntlet is never going to compare to a defensive line," says Fresno State running backs coach John Settle, whose Bulldogs are the only team not to lose a fumble this season. "And unless it's real wet out [during a game], the ball isn't going to be slippery." In lieu of using gimmicks and gadgets, Fresno State coaches tell their defensive players to try to strip teammates of the ball during drills and even between them. "That way, our whole practice is centered on ball security," says Settle. "Whenever a player drops a ball, he must immediately do 10 up-downs."

At Maryland, which has only two lost fumbles this fall, running backs coach Mike Locksley commends his players by showing them newspaper photos of themselves holding the ball high and tight. When a player fumbles during a drill, he must fetch balls thrown downfield by Locksley "until I'm tired," he says.

Some coaches simply exile frequent fumblers to a lonelier place than Fumble Island.

For complete scores, schedules and stats, plus Ivan Maisel's exclusive weekly Heisman Watch, go to **cnnsi.com/football/college.**

"Every team has a place for a guy who fumbles," says Western Kentucky coach Jack Harbaugh, crediting his former Bowling Green coach Doyt Perry. "And that place is standing next to me, for 60 minutes."

—Kelley King

Need a Room?

Knute Rockne Slept Here

Notre Dame Stadium is known as the House that Rockne Built, and now you can stay in a house where legendary Irish coach Knute Rockne lived. Chris Meehan, the current owner of the three-bedroom white frame home at 1006 St. Vincent Street, two blocks from the stadium in South Bend, turns his two spare bedrooms into guest quarters on home football weekends. The basic rate is $125 per night and includes continental breakfast.

According to Meehan, who graduated from Notre Dame in 1978, Rockne moved into the house in the early 1920s. "I had a 101-year-old neighbor, Mrs. Eleanor Wack, who died recently," says Meehan, 45, who works in marketing for a textbook distributor. "She remembered Rockne. She said that her dad and Rockne often would catch the streetcar on Notre Dame Avenue and ride to campus. Rockne and his players sometimes worked on the Notre Dame shift in the backyard."

Rockne moved from St. Vincent Street to a larger home a few blocks away a year or so before he died in a 1931 plane crash. In a '53 profile of Rockne in *Sport* magazine, Tom Hickey, who had lived next door on St. Vincent, recalled that Rockne had returned to his old street on what turned out to be the last night the coach would spend in South Bend. "He got down on the floor and played with the kids," Hickey said in the article, "and we had a lot of laughs." □

SPOTLIGHT

Tough Man to Disarm

Andra Davis is making up for lost time, and Florida is reaping the benefits

by Kelley King

A FEW HOURS after fracturing his right hand in the first quarter of last Saturday's 44–15 win at LSU, Florida middle linebacker Andra Davis was shrugging off the broken bone like a bee sting. "I'm not sure when it happened, and I didn't pay it much attention," said Davis, whose only concession to the injury was a soft cast that a team doctor applied at halftime. "I missed all last season. As long as I've got two legs, there's no way I'm going to miss a minute of this one."

DARREN CARROLL

Despite a broken right hand, Davis went full bore against LSU.

After being sidelined when he tore the medial collateral ligament in his left knee during the Gators' opener last year, against Ball State, Davis is back. So, it seems, is the Florida defense. Last season, with two freshmen manning the interior in place of Davis, the Gators' second-leading tackler in 1999, Florida yielded an average of 133.1 rushing yards per game. This season the Gators (5–0, 3–0 in the SEC), who leapfrogged Miami to become the No. 1 team in the nation after Saturday's victory, are yielding 71.8 rushing yards and a conference-low 9.0 points.

Davis, a fifth-year senior, is second on the team with 6.7 tackles per game, but his coaches and teammates agree that his impact can't be quantified. "Andra's being back makes all the difference. He's unbelievably well prepared and makes sure everyone else is, too," says defensive coordinator Jon Hoke, who had to simplify his pressure package midway through last season to accommodate his young linebacking corps. With Davis patrolling the middle, the rest of the defense now feels "a new freedom" to go for big plays, says senior defensive end Alex Brown, whose two sacks against LSU make him the Gators' alltime leader with 28. "Andra's always three steps ahead of the offense. He's the one getting people where they need to be."

Last year, when watching away games from his childhood home in Live Oak, Fla., Davis found himself shouting at the television set. The greatest incentive for rehabilitation came the first weekend in December, when Florida won the SEC championship the day after his first child, daughter Alisha, was born to his girlfriend of six years, Monique Philmore. "Having her has given me a new reason for working hard," says Davis.

With a baby in the house, Davis resolved to attack his waistline by forgoing junk food and alcohol; he also shed his knee brace by the start of spring drills and lingered after summer workouts to run extra sprints with defensive teammates Todd Johnson and Marquand Manuel, both starters, and Cory Bailey. Entering this year's opener, against Marshall, leaner (he'd lost 13 pounds to get down to 241) and meaner than ever, Davis sacked Thundering Herd quarterback Byron Leftwich so hard on the third play from scrimmage that he knocked Leftwich's mouthguard out of his mouth.

"Dre's going crazy," says Brown. "He's the best linebacker in the country, and if he continues playing like he's playing, people will start realizing that."

Following the Gators' 52–0 rout of Mississippi State on Sept. 29, Hoke made an effort to promote his star to a group of NFL general managers who were present. "Andra's not the fastest guy on the clock," Hoke told the visitors. "The stuff that he plays with is all inside."

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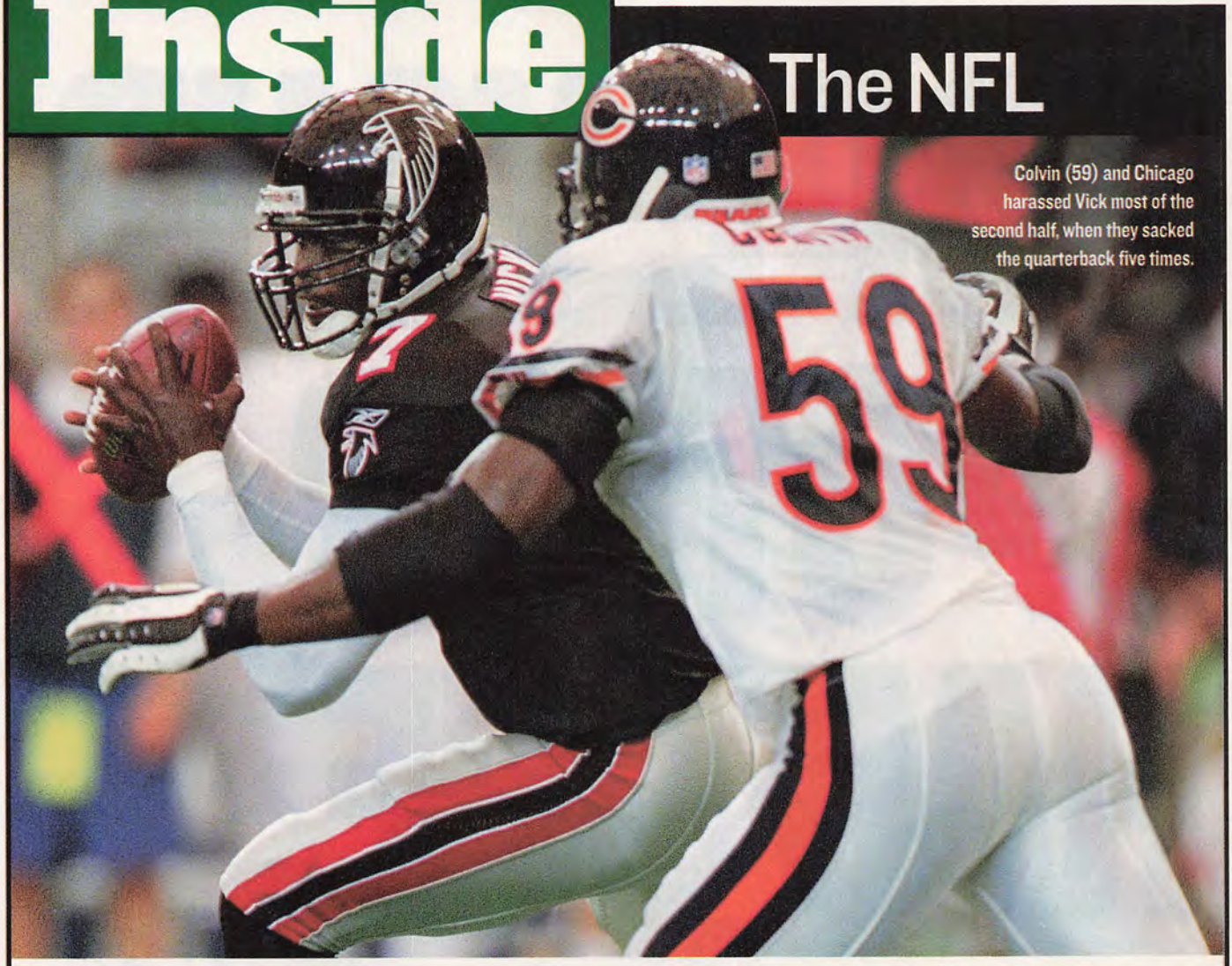


Colvin (59) and Chicago harassed Vick most of the second half, when they sacked the quarterback five times.

DAMIAN STROHMEYER

Trial and Error

A mauling by the Bears showed Falcons rookie Michael Vick just how much he has to learn

by Peter King

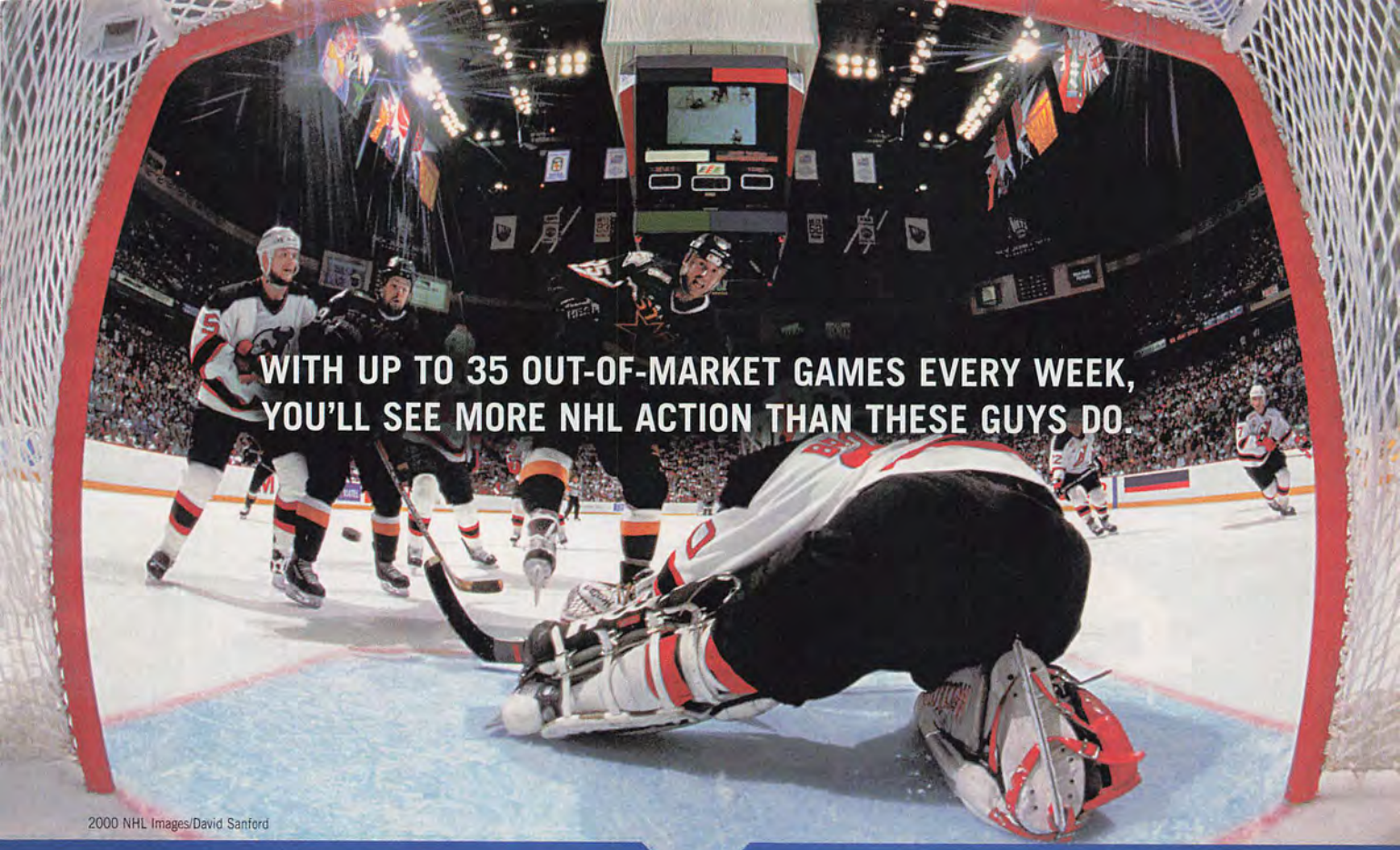
A LOT happened to Falcons wunderkind Michael Vick on Sunday during the first extended playing time of his NFL career. Most of what happened was bad.

Facing the Bears in the Georgia Dome, the electric kid from Virginia Tech was under center for seven drives, four more than in the Falcons' first three games combined. Atlanta scored three points on those possessions. In 40 plays Vick was sacked six times, once on a hit as violent as any you'll ever see, when Chicago linebacker Rosevelt Colvin came in from the blind side. Vick was stripped twice, and only a penalty against the Bears saved him from a third fumble. One of those strips, which resulted in linebacker Brian Urlacher's game-clinching 90-yard touchdown return early in the fourth quarter, looked as if it would send Atlanta coach Dan Reeves into orbit.

Vick did some good things. He threw smoothly on the run and, with a few on-target bullets, reminded us how good he might someday be. His numbers looked all right—12 completions in 18 attempts for 186 yards with no interceptions—but he was nine of 12 in garbage time, and he repeatedly tried to do too much. Mama said there'd be halves like this, halves when a 10–0 deficit grows into a 31–3 blowout.

"Nothing like this ever happened to me," a remarkably composed Vick said as he stood in front of his locker. "Never at Virginia Tech. Never anywhere. It hurts."

The Falcons didn't plan to use Vick so much in the game. In fact, had starter Chris Chandler not suffered a concussion in the first half, Vick might not have gotten on the field after halftime. (He took four snaps in the first half.) Reeves's plan with his $49 million franchise quarterback is an excellent one: Every week have Vick perfect eight to 10 plays, and then use them in one



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or two drives during the game. In addition give him about a half-dozen plays to use in goal line and short-yardage situations so he can be inserted as a change-up from pocket passer Chandler. "Michael has to play to get better," Reeves said last Saturday. "He has to learn the offense gradually and get out on the field to put what he learns into action."

Chandler isn't crazy about the arrangement. "I'd be lying if I said I liked it," he said last week, "but I realize why Dan's doing it." However, he's one of the few who doesn't like it. Says Vick, "It's the best way to go about learning an offense, especially with all the formations and motion in the NFL."

Sunday's game showed how far Vick has to go but also offered glimpses of his multiple gifts. In the fourth quarter he leaped over Urlacher on a designed run out of the shotgun, gaining nine yards. Later he rolled left and hit wideout Quentin McCord with a 26-yard strike.

As Reeves said, Vick simply needs to play. To succeed, though, he also needs to avoid getting down mentally when he fails. Foremost, Vick needs to learn when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em. Perfect example: Early fourth quarter, Bears up 17–0, Atlanta's ball, first-and-goal on the Chicago 3. The Falcons' last chance to make it a game. Vick sprinted left, looking, looking, looking—but everyone was covered. As Bears defensive end Phillip Daniels grabbed his legs, Vick cocked his arm, trying to make something out of nothing. Daniels jarred the ball loose. Urlacher gathered it in and ran for the easiest 90-yard touchdown he'll ever score.

Vick slowly walked to the sideline, his jersey askew, his shoulder pads hanging out. Reeves met him before he reached the bench, and as Reeves grabbed the shirt at the neckline and stretched it back over the pads, he reminded the quarterback, "Mike, you can't try to salvage every play. Throw it away. You had three downs to make a play, and you didn't use 'em."

That was the lesson on this trying day. "I also learned you've got to take care of the ball in the red zone or you won't be a good player," Vick said. "I made some mistakes today. It's tough to take right now, but that's what I'm here for. I have to keep my spirits up, pray tonight, come back tomorrow and get better."

For 20 minutes Vick talked like this. When almost everyone was gone, he turned toward his locker, stretched and shook hands with a well-wisher. "I'm going to be all right," he said. Then he winked. "Trust me."

PETER READ MILLER

Green Bay's Sack Specialist

Kabeer Making a Name for Himself

Last week SI asked players around the league: "Do you know who Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila is?"

"Never heard of him," said Jaguars linebacker Kevin Hardy. "Who does he play for?" asked

the football Beat

>MATCH GAME

Chargers quarterback Doug Flutie versus the Patriots and their fans

"I'm the local boy," says Flutie, who loves Massachusetts and knows his former neighbors feel the same way about him. "I'm one of them." He returns to New England piloting the 3–1 Chargers in a venue, Foxboro Stadium, where he has lost but once in eight NFL starts. "There's been a connection there for 20 years, going back to Boston College and continuing because I played for the Patriots," he says. Flutie's most memorable Foxboro moment: After being dealt from Chicago to New England in 1987, he started against the fearsome Bears' defense on Oct. 30, 1988. His first pass was an 80-yard touchdown to wideout Irving Fryar. He threw for three more scores in a 30–7 Patriots win. "I loved looking across the field and seeing Coach Ditka get on the Chicago quarterbacks," Flutie recalls.

>WORD ASSOCIATION

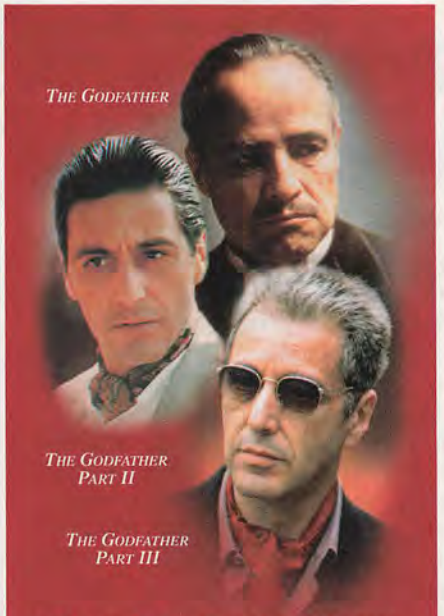
With San Francisco quarterback Jeff Garcia (left)

SI: Overcoming stereotypes.
Garcia: At 6′ 1″ and 190 pounds, I've been labeled as a small quarterback with a weak arm ever since I came out of San Jose State [in 1994]. I had to go to Canada because of it. I think I've proved that my arm's good enough to make every throw in the NFL.
SI: Canadian Football League.
Garcia: I wouldn't be the player I am today without the five years I spent in Calgary. I remember in '95 when Doug [Flutie] hurt his elbow and I had to play against Edmonton. Packed house in Calgary, 37,000 people who had no idea who I was. I threw for 546 yards and six touchdowns.
SI: Best asset.
Garcia: The ability to throw on the run.
SI: Joe Montana.
Garcia: The greatest quarterback ever to play the game.
SI: Steve Young.
Garcia: Showed that a great athlete can be a great quarterback.
SI: Jerry Rice.
Garcia: In college I was at a bar one night and Jerry was in there. I was a sophomore. I guess I was feeling a bit confident. So I went up to him and said, "Someday I'm going to be throwing passes to you." He was like, O.K., whatever.
SI: Football goal.
Garcia: Winning a sixth ring for the 49ers.

>HISTORY BOOK

Oct. 14, 1945: Chicago ends the NFL's longest losing streak—against Chicago

Think it's hopeless to be a Cardinals fan? You should have seen how bad things got for the franchise during the war years. The Chicago Cardinals went almost three full seasons—29 games—between NFL victories. (Chicago and the Pittsburgh Steelers combined teams in 1944 because of the number of players who were serving in the armed forces, but their 0–10 record isn't included in what is recognized as a 19-game skid.) The Cardinals finally ended their slide by beating the Bears 16–7 at Wrigley Field. How rough did things get for the Cardinals? In 1943 end Clint Wager missed the ball while working on his punting in practice and somehow kneed himself in the head. He suffered a fractured skull.



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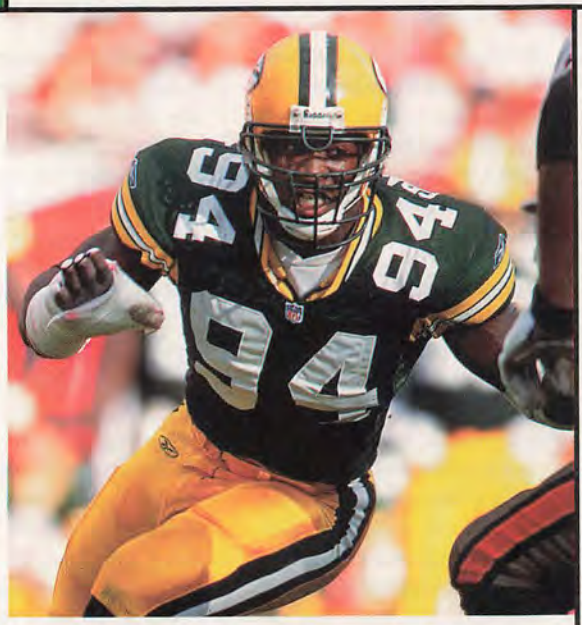
Patriots cornerback Ty Law.

"Maybe some guy in Pakistan's government?" said Steelers defensive end Aaron Smith.

The man with the impossible name (ka-BEER BA-jah BEE-ah-MIL-ah) is the second-year defensive end with the Packers who leads the NFL in sacks with nine after four games, including three on Sunday against Tampa Bay. The son of Nigerian parents who raised seven children on the mean streets of south central Los Angeles, Gbaja-Biamila was determined not to let his surroundings defeat him. "I called our house the jail because my father wouldn't let us out except to go to school or to school events," he says. His parents also made him believe in himself and in his ability to achieve whatever he put his mind to.



BOB ROSATO

Gbaja-Biamila already has a pair of three-sack games this year.

The 6' 5", 252-pound Gbaja-Biamila, San Diego State's alltime sack leader, came to Green Bay in the fifth round of the 2000 draft as a speed rusher. After an undistinguished, 1½-sack rookie season, he watched as Green Bay took a similarly undersized player, Jamal Reynolds of Florida State, in the first round last April to play the elephant end, the speed rusher in defensive coordinator Ed Donatell's scheme. However, Gbaja-Biamila outperformed Reynolds this summer and has played the elephant in all obvious passing downs. One amazing thing about Gbaja-Biamila is that he leads the league in sacks despite being on the field for only 47% of Green Bay's defensive plays.

Although he's short on name recognition, Gbaja-Biamila is getting noticed on the field, where he's starting to get double-teamed. "It's a sign of respect," he says. "Eventually I will find ways to defeat that. I have to."

Economic Impact

League May Throw Networks a Life Raft

With the poor economic climate forcing the four networks that carry games into early-season cost-cutting, the league will consider some form of relief. "We're not bleeding," one network vice president said last week. "We're hemorrhaging." Fox, for instance, has dropped the popular yellow first-down line, in an effort to save $1 million, and is having lead analyst John Madden do interviews for the pregame show to cut down on reporters' travel expenses. The cost of the 59 ad spots per game is down about 10% from 2000 levels and, sources say, some are going for significantly less.

The league has an option to reopen negotiations on its TV contracts after the 2002 season, but it doesn't want the networks awash in red ink. "We as a league have to take a serious look at that, as far as how we try to restructure the contract," says Broncos owner Pat Bowlen, a member of the broadcast committee. One possibility: Allowing more on-screen sponsorships of in-game enhancements, like the first-down stripe.

Giants' New Punter

Rookie Puts Best Foot Forward

Growing up in Atlanta, Rodney Williams would watch the Monday-night game each week with his father. One night, when Reggie Roby was punting for the Dolphins, Syggred Williams, who is African-American, said to his son, "Watch this guy. You may never see [a black punter] again in the NFL."

"I know what he meant," says Rodney, who in his first season with the Giants leads the league in net punting with a 42.1-yard

Send your pro football questions for Peter King's mailbag and read more from Paul Zimmerman at **cnnsi.com/football**.

Dispatches

BEFORE THE season, Broncos wideout **Rod Smith** and cornerback **Deltha O'Neal** made a deal: Smith would pay $100 for each O'Neal interception; O'Neal would pay $100 for each Smith touchdown catch. With Smith, the NFL's leading receiver, putting up huge numbers, O'Neal asked him two weeks ago to call it off. Smith said no. "I wouldn't let him quit," Smith says. "I told him, 'I need more out of you, and the team needs more out of you.' " Denver got it in a 20–6 win over Kansas City. O'Neal, a second-year player who was still looking for his first career interception, tied an NFL record with four pickoffs. Smith and O'Neal are all square. . . . On Sunday, Titans guard **Bruce Matthews** set the league mark for most games played by a nonkicker, appearing in number 283, a 26–7 loss to the Ravens, to break the record established by Vikings defensive end **Jim Marshall**. "How fitting that Bruce breaks the record in Baltimore on the weekend Cal Ripken plays his last game," said Ravens coach **Brian Billick**. "They're kindred spirits." . . . The Patriots' **Tom Brady** might be a backup quarterback thrust into a starting job, but he's also the breath of fresh air the team needs. After a 30–10 loss in Miami, Brady rapped his teammates for poor practice habits. "We need to start taking a different attitude in practice," Brady said. "You can't have an average practice on Wednesday and Thursday, an O.K. one on Friday and expect to play well on Sunday." . . . The Jets are allowing a league-high 164 rushing yards a game, with the Dolphins' **Lamar Smith** and the Rams' **Marshall Faulk** on the schedule the next two weeks. . . . The young Eagles showed their immaturity on Sunday, letting Arizona hang around long enough to get a last-gasp win on **Jake Plummer**'s 35-yard scoring pass to wideout **MarTay Jenkins** with nine seconds left. The Cardinals drove 76 yards in 64 seconds without a timeout.

average. "It's not a very glamorous position. When I played football with my friends, we wanted to be Jerry Rice or Joe Montana. Nobody ever said, 'I want to be Ray Guy.' "

After badly spraining his left ankle before his junior year in high school, Williams, a one-time soccer goaltender with a strong leg, didn't have a choice: He could either punt for the football team or not play at all. He went on to punt for four years at Georgia Tech and, amid failed trials with the Rams in 1999 and the Redskins in 2000, spent two seasons in NFL Europe before catching on with the Giants. In his NFL debut, against the Broncos on Sept. 10, he averaged 55.1 yards on eight kicks, including a club-record 90-yarder.

Williams has been vital to the Giants because of his ability to drop unreturnable long punts on opponents, negating runbacks for a team that must play field-position football to win. He bailed out the Giants twice in the first quarter against the Saints on Sept. 30. From the New York 18 his 51-yard punt, with no return, backed up the Saints to their 31. Kicking out of the end zone on his next punt, he boomed a 63-yarder, again with no return. With the Giants clinging to a seven-point fourth-quarter lead over the Redskins on Sunday, Williams hit a 59-yarder that coupled with a 15-yard penalty backed Washington up to its 28.

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Williams was lucky even to be around for that game. Before the Giants' 13–3 win in Kansas City on Sept. 23, he had rarely worn a seat belt while driving. Before that game he got a good talking-to from Edith Morgan, the mother of Chiefs linebacker Derrick Thomas, who died of complications from a January 2000 car accident in which he wasn't wearing a seat belt. Two days later Williams rolled his Range Rover on the New Jersey Turnpike near Giants Stadium, and the SUV came to a rest upside down. He walked away with a cut on his tongue. A police officer told Williams he was surprised that anyone had survived the wreck. "I was wearing my seat belt because of Derrick's mom, and I'm positive I survived only because of the seat belt," Williams says. "It only validates my thought that I'm here to do something special."

My Two Cents

Bus's Bandwagon Just Too Small

1. Aside from the Jets' Curtis Martin, Jerome Bettis, who on Sunday became the 14th player to surpass the 10,000-yard rushing mark with a 153-yard effort during the Steelers' 16–7 win over the Bengals, is the most underappreciated back of his day. Consider that Bettis, running behind a lesser line than the Cowboys' Emmitt Smith, has averaged 1,351 yards a season in five-plus years in Pittsburgh, only 16 yards fewer than Smith has in 11-plus years in Dallas.

2. I don't care what kind of pressure Mike Holmgren is feeling in Seattle. He should resist the temptation to bench Matt Hasselbeck for the NFL-tested Trent Dilfer. Before this season Hasselbeck had 29 pass attempts, and you have to fail at quarterback before you can succeed. We know what Dilfer's ceiling is. We don't yet know about Hasselbeck's. □

Dr. Z's forecast

IS HOME FIELD really that much of an edge? No one knows for sure, but two of Sunday's big winners at home, Tampa Bay and Baltimore, take to the road as underdogs against teams that lost road games last weekend.

The Bucs visit Tennessee, which got hammered by the Ravens, who are now on the road against Green Bay, which lost that thriller to the Bucs. Interesting, eh? Both Tampa Bay and Baltimore have played clunkers away from home. The Bucs lost in the last minute to the Vikings and beat the Cowboys by only four points. The Ravens lost to Cincinnati.

Things have changed, though. Baltimore is playing with its old swagger. Everyone figured that the Ravens' D would make life tough for the Titans, but no one knew that Baltimore's offense would be so punishing on the ground or that Travis Taylor would emerge as such an acrobatic receiver. Now the Ravens are underdogs, and you can bet coach Brian Billick will squeeze that for all the motivation it's worth.

AARON JOSEFCZYK/REUTERS

Corey Fuller and the surging Browns will have their hands full in Cincinnati.

Brett Favre threw three interceptions against the Bucs, but he also brought the Pack back at the end and almost pulled out the win. Green Bay's defense has been better than anyone expected, unleashing a lightning-fast edge rusher named Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila (nine sacks in four games), who has been so dynamic that the team's first-round draft choice, Jamal Reynolds, has been inactive for the first four games. Chances are that KGB will line up on the left side to go against the tandem of Williams tackles, Sammy and Erik, rather than All-Pro left tackle Jonathan Ogden. Gbaja-Biamila will cause problems, but not as many as the Ravens' defense will present. **The pick is Baltimore** in—it sounds funny to say it—an upset.

Whenever the Titans had difficulty moving the ball last season, their defense kept them in the game. Opponents this year, however, have hit winless Tennessee for an average of 376 yards in its first three games. Defensive end Jevon Kearse has been invisible, and Tennessee's best pass defender, cornerback Samari Rolle, injured his neck on Sunday. Tampa Bay's offense, which beat the Packers with a 95-yard drive, is still trying to find an identity, but Keyshawn Johnson, who is again making the tough catches in traffic, keeps squeezing out first downs. The Titans' sputtering attack should be made to order for Tampa Bay's D, which isn't the quick-striking, fly-to-the-ball outfit it once was but is still functional. **The Bucs are the pick** in upset No. 2.

Let's make the trifecta complete and **go for another road underdog, Oakland,** to get its ground game working and win in Indianapolis. I'll give Miami's Lamar Smith about 140 yards on 28 carries as **the Dolphins win** against a Jets defense that has been hammered by the run.

The amazing Browns, thumping their chests and predicting playoffs after their 3–1 start, will come down to earth in Cincinnati. **I like the Bengals** in a squeaker. No squeaker at the St. Louis Speedway, though. The Rams will take the rookies in the Giants' secondary, cornerback Will Allen and nickelback Will Peterson, to school on their souped-up track. **St. Louis is the pick.** The 49ers beat the Falcons in overtime on the coast in Week 1. The teams meet in Atlanta, and **I'll take San Francisco** again over the banged-up Falcons. I also like **San Diego** at New England and **Kansas City** at home against Pittsburgh. The Broncos need another wideout to go with Rod Smith, but they've won four of the last five in Seattle. **Denver beats the Seahawks** on the ground.

Finally there's the Monday-nighter, Washington at Dallas, a matchup loaded with history but now only desperation. The Redskins played the NFC champion Giants dead even for three quarters. Defensive end Kenard Lang turned in the finest game of any D lineman this season. **Washington to win on emotion.**

—Paul Zimmerman

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The Fan Who Came in from the Cold

by Rick Reilly

MY OLD Russian contact, Ivan the Unbearable, showed up at my door yesterday. Before I knew it, he was plopped on the sectional, drinking my beer, scouring *TV Guide*. Seems Ivan had just finished a lengthy engagement in Siberia for using five aces to win too many rubles from the czar's great-grand-nephew.

"Amerikansky," he said, eating my hoagie, "it is 10 years since I have seen TV or newspaper. What is buzz in your National Foozball League?"

Uh, well, I said, *the San Diego Ch—*

Suddenly he jumped on the coffee table and roared, "What is this?" He was pointing to a listing in *TV Guide*. "This week: *Monday Night Foozball*—Washington Redskins at Dallas Cowboys! It does not get better than such as this, Amerikansky!"

Well, actually, Ivan—

"Holy borscht!" he cried, pounding the buttons on my remote. "Is best rivalry in all foozball! Is best rivalry in all sport!"

No, Ivan. It's not what you think. Both of these teams are aw—

"Awesome, yes, I know! We shall have monster kegger! You bring Hogs noses, and I dress in Tom Landry fedora! Give me phone! Must get hands on good tickets to scalp to senators!"

No, no. Nobody wants Redskins tickets anymore. They want Wizards tickets!

"Bah. You drink too much wodka. Do you know toll-free for Eastern Airlines? I will rent giant 747 to bring rowdy Redskins fans down. Must call my friend Jack Kent Cooke, smartest owner in sports. He will bankroll deal for his comrade Ivan."

No, no, no! Cooke's dead. The Redskins now belong to the dumbest owner in sports, Dan Snyder. He signed all these old guys he must've had posters of on his bedroom wall when he was a kid, and now the Redskins are just bad—

"Boys! Yes, they have always been bad boys! Riggo under table—'Loosen up, Sandy, baby!' George Allen shutting off hot water in Cowboys' shower! Harvey Martin throwing funeral wreath into Redskins' locker facility! Oh, what a rumbling we will have!"

No, no. No rumbling, I tried to say as he went through my closet, trying on sport jackets. *Bumbling, but no rumb—*

"How can it miss? Joe Gibbs, great, great coach, no? Jimmy Johnson, great, great hair spray, no?"

No, no. Those guys are gone, Ivan. Johnson just rides around in his boat, and Gibbs just runs race cars. Neither of them coaches football anymore.

Ivan's face was starting to fall like the Berlin Wall. "But what of Troy Aikman and Mooooooose Johnston and Joe Heisman Theismann?"

All in the broadcasting booth.

"Delightfully zany Cowboys owner Jerry Jones?"

Well, he's still the Cowboys' owner, but you might not recognize him. He lost weight and they say he had a face-lift. He looks more like Shirley Jones now.

"Still! Redskins-Cowboys always great game, no? For Eastern National Conference of Foozball lead, no?"

> "Redskins at Cowboys! It does not get better than such as this, Amerikansky!"

Sorry, Ivan, they're now the two worst teams in the NFL. Together, they're 0–8. The Cowboys start a rookie quarterback named Quincy Carter with a passing rating of, like, a hat size. The Redskins are even worse. Their quarterback is Tony Banks, who couldn't drive a Toyota 80 yards, much less a football team. Combined, both teams would have a hard time scoring on Madonna.

Ivan finally put down the phone. He looked as if he wanted to jump off the top of the Winter Palace. "No more Clint Longley on Thanks of Giving Day? No more Darrell Green catching Tony Dorsett from behind? No more 'No, Danny, no!'?"

No, Ivan, no.

I thought he might cry. "The lobster whistles on the hill," he groaned. "The unthinkable is thinked."

There was a sad pause. Suddenly, Ivan's face lit up like a 1,000-watt bulb. "Ahh, Amerikansky friend!" he said, snatching up the *TV Guide*. "At least there is always collegiate foozball! Collegiate foozball never to disappoint Ivan!"

Absolutely! I replied. *You can always count on college football! Who are your favorite teams?*

"The two greatest collegiate foozball teams, all time!" he said, beaming. "Notre Dame and Penn State!" □

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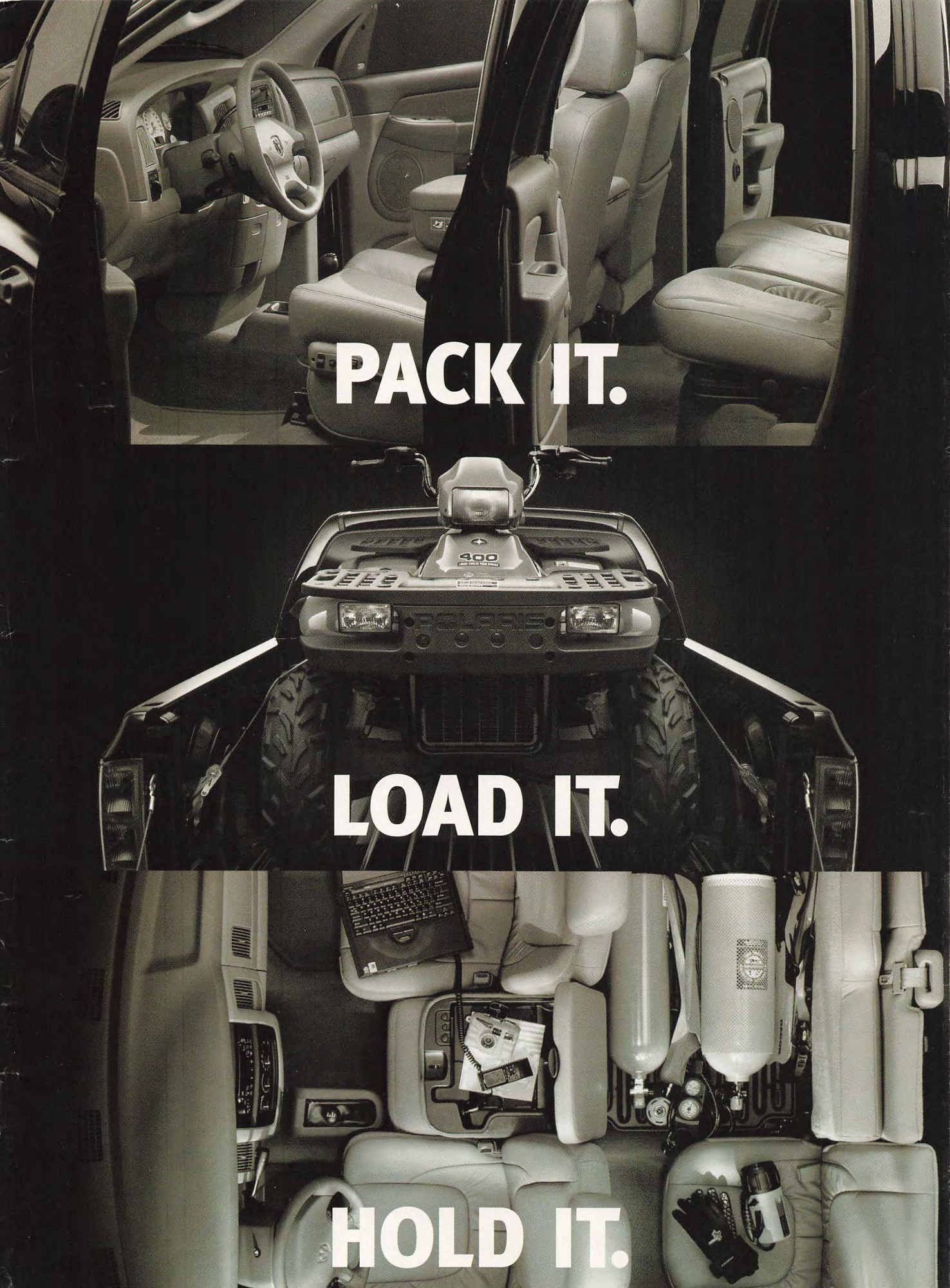
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